

AND

New 49ers offensive tackle Jonas Jennings



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Visitor IDs must be left at gate; ban on overnight stays to be enforced

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Capt. Lonnie Moore, wounded in Iraq in April 2004 and expected to remain at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington through March, already has gotten a few job offers. Moore, right, and 1st Lt. Stephen Rice from Godfrey, Ill., who was wounded in Iraq in December 2003, work together during a physical therapy session. Injured veterans are in high demand among contractors who say many of the skills acquired in the military are applicable in the private sector.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

World

Jiang Zemin's retirement: Former Chinese President Jiang Zemin submitted his resignation Friday from his last official post as chairman of a largely ceremonial government military panel, completing a long-planned retirement, the government said.

Jiang, 78, submitted his request to resign as chairman of the government's Central Military Commission to leaders of China's parliament, the official Xinhua News Agency announced.

The commission has no major powers over the military, which is run by a parallel panel of the ruling Communist Party. Jiang handed over his post as chairman of that party commission in September to President Hu Jintao, who earlier succeeded him as party leader.

Leprosy victims in Japan: Japan's policy of forcing leprosy victims into isolation during most of the past century was a severe violation of human rights by government officials and doctors, a government panel has found.

Japan forcibly quarantined sufferers of leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, in isolated sanitariums during an 89-year policy that only ended in 1996—decades after a cure was found and researchers knew the illness was not highly contagious.

Korean War remains: Representatives from the United States and North Korea met Friday in the demilitarized zone dividing the two Koreas to discuss U.S. missions to recover the remains of Americans still missing from the Korean War, the U.S. military said.

The joint project, scheduled to begin in April, comes despite the ongoing international standoff on North Korea's nuclear weapons programs. The North claimed on Feb. 10 that it had developed nuclear weapons and would boycott international disarmament talks.

Taiwan independence: China won't tolerate formal independence for Taiwan, President Hu Jintao said Friday as parliament prepared to enact an anti-secession law that leaders in the self-ruled island fear could lead to a military attack.

"We will continue to make our greatest efforts with the utmost sincerity to seek the prospects of peaceful reunification," Hu said at an official gathering, according to the government's Xinhua News Agency.

However, he said, "We will never tolerate 'Taiwan independence' and never allow the 'Taiwan independence' secessionist forces



Nepal government: Policemen detain activists with the United Marxist Leninist Communist Party Nepal during an anti-monarchy rally in Katmandu, Nepal, on Friday. Nepal's government has extended by two months the house arrest of five top political leaders who were detained after the king sacked the government and took power on Feb. 1, officials said.

to make Taiwan secede from the motherland under any name or by any means."

States

Colorado serial rapes case: Police Chief Ricky Bennett has resigned over the department's release of a man who admitted molesting an 8-year-old boy and who is suspected of committing at least five rapes.

Mayor Ed Tauer said Bennett stepped down Thursday to become a district captain voluntarily, but city officials were considering removing him from the post.

City Manager Ron Miller and Deputy City Manager Frank Ragan, Bennett's direct supervisor, were suspended Wednesday for two weeks without pay.

Robert Blake trial: Robert Blake's defense lawyer ended his closing arguments Friday by reminding jurors that to reach convictions they must be certain he solicited his wife's murder then shot her after no one else would.

"Probably guilty is not enough," attorney M. Gerald Schwartzbach said.

If convicted, the former "Baretta" star could be sentenced to life in prison.

Jurors were expected to get the case after the prosecutor rebutted the defense's closing arguments.

Terror money trial: Documents, videotapes and secretly recorded conversations

prove a Yemeni sheik and his assistant gave vital support to some of the world's deadliest terrorists, including Osama bin Laden, a federal prosecutor charged in closing arguments Thursday.

"Although these defendants didn't strap bombs onto themselves or fly planes into the World Trade Center, they're indispensable to the people who do," prosecutor Pamela Chen told jurors in Brooklyn federal court.

Washington election challenge: Republicans have released 1,135 names of alleged felons who they say illegally cast ballots in the governor's race that Democrat Christine Gregoire won by 129 votes.

The list turned over to Democratic Party lawyers on Thursday contained the names and addresses of the alleged felons, along with 45 people who Republicans say died before the Nov. 2 election but who were listed as having voted.

Flu season: After all the panic last fall over the vaccine shortage, the flu season is turning out to be milder than last year's severe bout, but it may not have peaked yet, the government said Thursday.

"It doesn't look like it's as severe as last year, but it's too early to tell," said Lynette Brammer of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's influenza branch.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

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Army in Japan tightens base visitation rules

JULIANA GITTLER

Stars and Stripes

Under a modified guest policy at U.S. Army installations in Japan, visitors soon will have to turn in their identification cards to gate guards in exchange for a pass while on post.

In addition, a long-standing rule that prohibits overnight guests in bachelor quarters will be enforced, according to U.S. Army Garrison-Japan commander, Col. Garland Williams.

Residents at Army bases in

Guests must leave identification with security guards; Policy on unauthorized overnight stays to be enforced

Japan were told of the changes at gate entrances this week and told the rules were to go into effect Friday.

The changes were prompted by soldiers not signing guests out, as dictated in base access rules implemented last year.

"People were not signing off their visitors," Williams wrote in

response to a Stars and Stripes query. "Also visitors were spending the night, on post, against posted [regulations]."

The access rules required sponsors to sign visitors in and out at the same gate. Visitors were required to show approved identification: a driver's license or passport for Japanese residents or a

passport or alien registration card for other nationalities.

Williams wrote that the prohibition on overnight guests isn't new. However, it now will be enforced. Regulations require that guests exit the base by midweek days and by 1 a.m. on weekends.

Sponsors still will be able to obtain a guest pass for visitors such

as family coming from the United States, with prior written approval. People who violate the new rule could lose their ability to host guests in the future.

At Army lodging facilities, including Hardy Barracks, a popular downtown Tokyo lodging location with space-available rooms for personnel from all services, visitors who are registered as guests with the lodging office in advance still will be allowed on post anytime, including overnight.

E-mail: Juliana Gittler at: gittler@sptrips.osd.mil



VAL GEMPE/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Members of the 374th Security Forces Squadron, Yokota Air Base, Japan, assist Master Sgt Terry Cross, right, from the 374th Mission Support Squadron, and his daughter Shannon Cross, left, after her car got stuck during a snow storm.

Storm dumps snow on Yokota

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — March is, in fact, coming in like a lion for some bases on Japan's Kanto Plain.

A storm dumped snow on the region early Friday morning, with Yokota Air Base receiving the brunt of the accumulation, among U.S. military installations, at 6.5 inches.

Staff Sgt. Shaun Autrey, a weather forecaster with Yokota's 20th Operational Weather Squadron, said snow began falling around 4 a.m. Friday and continued until around 1 p.m.

"For this one, I don't believe it was a record-breaker, but the heaviest snowfall of the year, definitely," he said.

Base officials canceled school, but base employees were expected to report to work, according to a 374th Airlift Wing spokeswoman.

Myrna Puzon, Yokota Arts and Crafts Center program manager, said business was down Friday, but "it was catch-up time for us." Workers there took advantage of the lull, cleaning the store and sprucing up the merchandise.

Puzon left home on the east side of base around 8:45 a.m. and said she took it slow on her drive into work. She said the deep snow made it difficult to see where the road ended and the sidewalk began.

"I'm just hoping I'm on the street, not going on the sidewalk," she said.

Naval Air Facility Atsugi officials, reported a few inches of snow Friday but said schools and base facilities remained open. Yokosuka Naval Base officials reported a light snow and said nothing was canceled or damaged.

The Yokota weather squadron issued a heavy-snow warning for Camp Zama, but weather forecasters and Stars and Stripes were unable to reach base officials there Friday for a report on accumulation. A Zama High School official said say schools were in session. Camp Fuji officials were unavailable for comment.

Light snow was in the Kanto Plain forecast for Saturday night and Sunday, Autrey said, but "nothing nearly as significant as today."

The Japan Meteorological Agency observed less than an inch of snow in Tokyo and Yokohama as of 2:15 p.m. Friday. The agency expected no more snow over the weekend, but cautioned there was a danger of icy roads as water on pavement could freeze as temperatures dropped overnight.

Puzon abandoned plans to go to Tokyo on Saturday, opting instead to borrow

some videos and stay inside.

"Hearing it's going to snow (Friday night)," she said, "I'm not going to go outside tomorrow."



T.D. FLACK/Stars and Stripes

Five-year-old Arian Garvin, left, and her 7-year-old brother, Elijah, build a snowman Friday at Yokota Air Base, Japan.

'Don't delay' reporting injuries, VA repurges

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan — Ray Regelein's message to servicemembers who soon will be separated from or retiring from the military: Don't delay.

A Department of Veterans Affairs representative, Regelein was at Misawa last week to talk to military personnel about VA benefits they may qualify for after stepping out of their uniform.

One question he hears time and again concerns disability compensation, Regelein said. Though it's easier to qualify for these benefits than one may think — knee injuries, for example, are common — it's important to establish that service connection early rather than 20 years down the road.

"I always tell people 'don't delay,'" Regelein said. "Make sure they file a claim with the VA and let us make the decision."

Servicemembers can qualify for disability compensation if they've suffered an injury or illness while on active duty that leaves any kind of residual effect, "no matter how minor," Regelein said. The benefits include priority medical care at VA facilities, and, depending on the degree of disability, monetary compensation.

Even a heart condition, high blood pressure or diabetes may qualify as service-connected for personnel who were in the service for many years, Regelein said, as long as it was diagnosed while the member was on active duty and drug or alcohol abuse wasn't involved.

Regelein has been working from Yokosuka Naval Base since January, where he's temporarily assigned to cover U.S. military bases in the Tokyo area north to Misawa as part of the Defense Department's overseas military program. VA representatives rotate in and out of Japan about every five months for the program. Regelein visits Misawa about once a month to speak at the Family Support Center's new Transition Assistance Program Benefits Brief for personnel getting ready to retire or separate from the service.

Another VA representative is scheduled to visit Misawa March 17-18. To book a one-on-one consultation or to reserve a spot at

Other VA issues

Other issues Department of Veterans Affairs representative Ray Regelein often fields questions about include:

■ **Education benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill:** Regelein encourages servicemembers to enroll in the "kicker" program. Under the Montgomery GI Bill, servicemembers who served their full enlistment may receive an education entitlement of up to \$1,004 a month for 36 months. By adding \$600 to their initial contribution of \$1,200, military members can increase their monthly entitlement by \$350 a month, Regelein said. "You have to put the money in before you separate from the service."

■ **Home loan program:** The VA guarantees a portion of a loan up to \$249,000 to the lender in lieu of a down payment from the veteran. Regelein said loans may run as high as \$359,000, though with higher amounts a down payment may be involved. The VA funding fee of half a percent may be waived if the servicemember has a disability rating by the VA of 10 percent or more. Those fees also can be rolled into the loan interest, Regelein said.

■ **Vocational Rehabilitation Services:** Veterans with a disability rating 20 percent or more are entitled to training under the VA's vocational rehabilitation program. The program helps disabled veterans acquire the skills they need for employment and find a job.

■ **Higher VA health care enrollment fees:** Some members of Congress are proposing to impose an enrollment fee of at least \$200 a year for 4 million veterans who are neither poor nor suffering from service-connected disabilities. "Like every other agency, we're at the mercy of funding, but you'll never have to pay for treatment for a service-connected condition," Regelein said.

—Jennifer Svan

the group briefing, call 226-4735. For more information about VA benefits, go to www.va.gov. Questions to Regelein may be sent to: regain@va.gov or cfay.navy.mil.

E-mail: Jennifer H. Svan at: svanj@sptrips.osd.mil



DEBRA BINGHAM/Courtesy to Stars and Stripes

Sgt. First Class Paul Kagi, a helicopter mechanic assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment of the Virginia Army National Guard, tests visibility through the windshield of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter that had just received a new laminate designed to prolong the life of the windshield. Kagi is one of two soldiers who submitted the idea for the laminate to the Army Suggestion Program.

Clear thinking pays off

Windshield-saving idea borrowed from NASCAR earns award for two Army Guard helo mechanics

BY AMANDA L. BOSTON
AND LISA BURGESS
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — What does a NASCAR race car and a military helicopter have in common, besides speed?

Thanks to two military NASCAR fans, they now will share tearaway coatings on their windshields, which reduce the cost of replacing the glass when pitted by debris or sand.

The idea to apply the coatings to helicopters belongs to Sgt. 1st Class Paul Kagi and Sgt. Mike "Moon" Mullen, two Virginia Army National Guard helicopter mechanics.

The soldiers had to fix the damage when a trip to the damage training center at Fort Irwin, Calif., five years ago caused major wear and tear to the unit's brand-new UH-60L Black Hawk helicopters. The windshields of about 80 percent of the unit's choppers had to be replaced, at a cost of \$15,000 per bird.

Helicopter units operating in the deserts of Iraq and Afghanistan are experiencing the same problem. From Sept. 30, 2002, to October 1, 2003, Black Hawks in Iraq were requiring new windshields every nine months on average, according to Taylor Frazier, an engineer in the Sustainment Engineering Branch of the Defense Supply Center Richmond, in Richmond, Va.

During "normal" use — training and garrison — the windshields last at least two years, Frazier said in a telephone interview Wednesday.

Using the Army's Suggestion Program, which pays soldiers for coming up with money- or life-saving solutions, Kagi and Mullen contacted the Defense Supply Center to suggest using the NASCAR approach to the problem.

race, according to Community/NASCAR teams relations director John Dodson with the NASCAR Technical Institute in Mooresville, N.C.

NASCAR actually borrowed the idea from motorcycle racers, Dodson said.

"We watched them use tear-away sheets on their helmets and just adapted it," Dodson said in a telephone interview.

After extensive testing, Army engineers found that the tear-away sheets worked as well for Black Hawks flying at 170 miles per hour as they do for race cars running 190 miles per hour.

The military version of the laminate, which is thicker and 10 times stickier than the one used on race cars and has added anti-static coatings, cost \$1,100 per helicopter and takes two hours to apply (plus 24 hours for the adhesive to cure).

Each laminate buys an additional six to 15 months of life for the

original screens and can be stripped off and re-applied as necessary, Frazier said.

On Feb. 28, the first Black Hawk maintenance unit in the Iraq theater was certified to apply the tearaway coating to its helicopters' windshields, Frazier said. Eventually, all deployed Black Hawk units will have access to the laminate.

Meanwhile, other Army and Navy helicopter program officials are considering using the film, Frazier said. The next group likely to test the sheets will probably be Chinook cargo helicopters.

As a reward for saving money and improving the survivability of the systems, Mullen and Kagi will split as much as \$25,000, although the exact amount has not been determined, according to Defense Supply Center Richmond spokeswoman Debra Bingham.

E-mail Amanda Boston at: bostona@stripes.osd.mil

E-mail Lisa Burgess at: burgessl@stripes.osd.mil

Course helps sailors keep their 'bearings'

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

NAVAL AIR FACILITY MISAWA, Japan — The Navy isn't giving up on struggling first-term sailors.

Whether they're battling substance abuse, financial problems, homesickness or low self-esteem, the Navy's "Bearings" program is designed to help young, troubled sailors complete their initial tour and gain their bearings, according to Navy officials.

A team of instructors from the Regional Support Organization at Naval Station San Diego is bringing the two-week course to Pacific-area installations, starting with NAF Misawa March 28 to April 8.

Other bases to be visited include Naval Air Facility Atsugi, U.S. Naval Base Guam, Sasebo Naval Base and Yokosuka Naval Base.

Bearings has been around since 2001, but the course later this month will be its debut at Misawa, said NAF Misawa Command Master Chief Michael McCarthy.

"I think it's great that they're coming out here," he said Tuesday. "There's a lot more stress on sailors first term, first tour out in Japan, 7,000 miles away from their families. This course helps them deal with that stress."

The program targets at-risk first-term sailors E-3 and below and E-4 sailors in the accelerated advancement program — usually between ages 18 and 25.

At NAF Misawa, immediate supervisors, senior enlisted advisors

and petty officers first class are being asked to identify sailors for the class, which has room for 18 to 25 people.

A supervisor might sign up a sailor not performing at 100 percent or displaying a poor attitude or problems dealing with authority, McCarthy said.

The program, the chief said, is an example of the Navy's proactive leadership.

"The bottom line is that we want to reach out to young sailors before they get off course and fall into a path of misconduct," he said.

Navy officials say the program teaches sailors to develop focused thinking, decision-making practices and personal accountability. The course covers communication skills, anger management, alcohol abuse, financial responsibility and Navy advancement.

Two days are devoted to a personal growth seminar conducted by Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Orientation, or CREDO. Physical training and routine uniform inspections also are included.

After NAF Misawa, the Bearings Pacific schedule includes:

■ NAF Atsugi, April 11 to 22.

■ U.S. Naval Base Guam, May 2 to 13.

■ Yokosuka Naval Base, Aug. 8 to 19.

■ Sasebo Naval Base, Aug. 22 to Sept. 2.

Visit www.rso.navy.mil/Bearings/ BearingsHome.html for more information on Bearings.

E-mail Jennifer H. Svan at: svanj@stripes.osd.mil

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Map showing Route 16, Yokosuka Naval Base, 7 eleven store, CMFE Building, and Yokosuka-Chou train Sta.

Eligible for attack but not combat badge

Some feel new CCB excludes their speciality from deserved recognition

BY CHARLIE COON

Stars and Stripes

KIRKUK, Iraq — It's a matter of respect, according to Spc. Manny Hornedo.

"When you walk around, it says 'This is what I did, this is what I earned,'" said Hornedo, a New Jersey Army National Guardsman with the 50th Main Support Battalion at Forward Operating Base Speicher.

The new Close Combat Badge is a good idea that would be made better if more soldiers were eligible for it, according to some who just finished a 60-mile convoy to deliver fuel, water and other supplies to FOB Warrior in Kirkuk.

The Army announced the creation of the new badge in February to recognize soldiers with combat arms specialties. It will be available to those soldiers later this year.

But a lot of soldiers are upset that they would not be eligible for the new badge because their specialty doesn't qualify. Among the specialties that don't qualify are: transportation, military police or others not performing infantry work.

"I definitely think more than a few MOSs should get it," said 1st Lt. Julie Nagle of the 642nd Military Intelligence Battalion, who said her troops have engaged in combat.

"A lot of the National Guard don't do their MOSs when they get over here," said Hornedo, a transportation specialist.

To others, getting a combat badge didn't matter.

"I don't really care; I'm here to do a job," said Spc. Darrin Greeno a mechanic and truck driver with the 50th MSB and the Minnesota Army National Guard.

Another soldier added that he liked the way the Marine Corps does it — no badges.

"They're all riflemen," the soldier said.

The Close Combat Badge, or CCB, is supposed to be the equivalent of the Combat Infantryman Badge, which was established during World War II to recognize infantrymen and Special Forces soldiers whose specialties would likely put them in harm's way.

But in Iraq, there are no front lines, where infantry would normally be placed. Instead, while infantry units work in many places,



CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Spcs. Rex Buchanan, left, and Darrin Greeno, driver-mechanics from the Minnesota Army National Guard and 50th Main Support Battalion, based at Forward Operating Base Speicher in Tikrit, Iraq, talk after escorting a convoy Tuesday to FOB Warrior in Kirkuk. They have different opinions on the new Close Combat Badge. Buchanan thinks all soldiers should be eligible for the Close Combat Badge; Greeno said all the proof of his service he needs is to return home alive.

anyone heading out the front gate faces the prospect of combat.

The proposed new badge is already creating a stir among the military ranks. Some letters this week to Stars and Stripes from readers downrange say the badge's criteria is too limited and

slights MPs, mechanics and others who often find themselves in battle, but would not be eligible to earn the new badge.

One letter writer said, "If the brass in Washington think that 12 (combat engineer and bridge crew member), 13 (field artillery) and 19 (armor) series soldiers are the only ones out there risking their lives, they need to come to Iraq and open their eyes... I hope the criteria is changed from what has been suggested. Everyone who went outside the wire to engage the enemy deserves the same recognition, regardless of their MOS."

Army officials late last month said troops' service is commendable, but the badge is designed to recognize those with an infantry mission.

Others downrange echo the letter writer.

Riding with Greeno in their Hemet wrecker and recovery truck was Spc. Rex Buchanan, also with the 50th MSB. Like Greeno, he drives the truck, can repair it and tow vehicles.

Buchanan was happy to get his combat patch, a rainbow on his right shoulder that signifies his service in theater for the 42nd Infantry Division, also known as the Rainbow Division. It is Buchanan's 20th year in the military but his first time overseas and first time in combat.

A badge to wear over the left breast pocket would be appropriate for anyone who earned it, he said.

"I hear about these guys going

Design of badge up for debate

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq — Maybe they should all be the same.

Or perhaps they could all be different to reflect soldier's military occupational specialty.

While many soldiers said they thought everyone facing combat should be awarded some type of badge, few could agree on what the Close Combat Badge should look like.

The Army, which recently announced the new badge, has not released information about its design.

"I think the engineer corps, signal, artillery, military police" should design their own," said Spc. Garrett Nodell of the 983rd Engineer Battalion. "I want to wear something that reflects engineering."

The background could be baby blue, like that of the traditional Combat Infantryman Badge, said Spc. Stan Eichelberger of 1st Battalion, 33rd Field Artillery Regiment. The CIB shows a musket on a baby blue background with a wreath around it.

"To signal the infantry part of it," Eichelberger said. "Maybe they could tie all the [MOSs] together in one crest that reflects all the MOSs."

Staff Sgt. Jason Olm of the 983rd's Headquarters Support Company and a veteran of Operation Desert Storm, hadn't thought about it much because he works as a cook and carpenter and isn't eligible. He thought if the new badge had a baby blue background like the infantry badge, it would just confuse people.

Then he added that one badge should cover all the various specialties if its wearer participated in infantry-style combat.

"One thing across the board," Olm said.

—Charlie Coon

out and drawing small-arms fire and getting [attacked by roadside bombs]," Buchanan said. "They should have a patch or something that says, 'Thanks for doing what you're doing.'"

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GI's defense: Autopsy shots too shocking for jury

By ESTES THOMPSON
The Associated Press

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — Lawyers for an Army sergeant charged with killing two officers in a grenade attack in Kuwait said Friday that some autopsy photos are too shocking to show a jury.

Prosecutors want to show jurors in the court-martial of Sgt. Hasan Akbar more than a dozen autopsy photos of the dead officers to identify the victims as well as show their manner of death.

A defense lawyer said the government could accomplish its aim by showing only the less graphic

Lawyers debate evidence in grenade murder case

some of the pictures.

"It's clear by looking at some of these pictures that their purpose is inflaming the panel," Maj. Dan Brookhart said.

Brookhart said the government doesn't need to arouse the panelists.

He said the defense intends to acknowledge the manner of the victims' death and argue that Akbar, who confessed several times, either had diminished mental capacity or was insane when the attacks occurred.

He cited one photo that shows a victim in a body bag with bloody boots and his T-shirt over his shoulders and medical equipment taped to his face. Another showing organs removed from a victim was "shocking in nature," Brookhart said.

Akbar is accused of stealing grenades from a Humvee and initiating the attack on fellow members of the 101st Airborne Division just days into the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. Army Capt. Christopher Seifert, 27, and Air

Force Maj. Gregory Stone, 40, were killed and another 14 soldiers were injured.

If convicted of two counts of premeditated murder and three counts of attempted premeditated murder, the 33-year-old Akbar could get the death penalty.

The case marks the first time since the Vietnam War that a soldier has been prosecuted for the murder or attempted murder of another soldier during wartime.

The entire court-martial is expected to last four weeks.



Sgt. Hasan Akbar



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IN THE WORLD

Report: Countries fail in gender equality

BY EDITH M. LEDERER

The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Many women are worse off today than they were 10 years ago, women around the world say in a new report that accuses governments of failing to keep their pledge to achieve gender equality.

Governments worldwide have adopted a "piecemeal and incremental" approach to women's rights that cannot achieve the goals in the landmark platform of action adopted at a 1995 U.N. conference in Beijing, it says.

The report is the work of women's rights activists in 150 countries. Compiled by the Women's Environment and Development Organization, an international advocacy group based in New York, it was released Thursday to coincide with a high-level U.N. meeting on implementing the platform. The message was clear, starting with the title: "Beijing Betrayed."

"The women of the world don't need any more words from their governments — they want action, they want resources and they want governments to protect and advance women's human rights," the report said.

The women's report sounded very different from the speeches this week at the U.N. conference, where governments have been touting their records on women's rights.

"The realities women document often contrast sharply with the officials' reports," June Zeitlin, the executive director of Women's Environment and Development, said.

"What we see are powerful trends — growing poverty, inequality, growing militarization, and fundamentalist opposition to women's rights," she said. "These trends are harming millions of women worldwide."

"Governments need to respond very strongly to counterbalance these trends and push the Beijing

platform to further women's rights," Zeitlin said.

Nonetheless, she said, "there is still some cause for celebration."

Advocates of women's rights have stepped up their activities around the globe and have pressed governments to change some discriminatory laws. The number of countries that ratified the 1979 convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women rose from 146 a decade ago to 179, though the United States has still not done so.

The goal of giving every girl and boy an elementary school education by 2005 is likely to be met everywhere but sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, the report said.

But despite these and other gains in the Beijing platform, "and despite a decade-worth of efforts ... many women in all regions are actually worse off than they were 10 years ago," the report said.

Violence against women remains an "acute problem" affect-

U.S. drops objections to declaration

The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Facing overwhelming opposition, the United States on Friday abandoned attempts to amend a declaration reaffirming the blueprint to achieve equality for women, saying it was satisfied the document did not guarantee the global right to abortion.

U.S. Ambassador Ellen Sauer-

brey said the United States would now join other nations in approving the declaration endorsing the 150-page platform for action adopted at the 1995 U.N. women's conference in Beijing by consensus.

With the United States now in agreement, delegates were scheduled to adopt the declaration later Friday.

ing some two-thirds of women in relationships worldwide, the report said.

While trafficking of women and children into bonded labor, forced marriage, forced prostitution, and domestic servitude has become a global phenomenon, governments don't appear to be making significant efforts to combat these crimes.

"Across all regions, women are

often still considered unequal to men — in the workplace, at home, in government — and assigned roles accordingly," it said.

The majority of the world's poor are women, and since Beijing "women's livelihoods for the most part have worsened, with increasing insecure employment and less access to social protection and public services," the report said.

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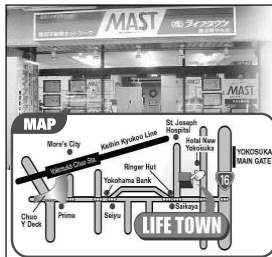
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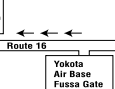
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AIDS warning

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — More than 80 million Africans may die from AIDS by 2025, the United Nations said in a report released Friday, warning this may create millions of orphans who could be easy recruits for rogue armies on a continent riven by wars.

While trafficking of women and children into bonded labor, forced marriage, forced prostitution, and domestic servitude has become a global phenomenon, governments don't appear to be making significant efforts to combat these crimes.

4 Mounties killed

TORONTO — Canadians were stunned Friday by the deadliest single attack on police officers in 120 years, after a gunman killed four Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers while they were investigating an illegal marijuana farm.

RCMP spokesman Col. Wayne Oakes said the four officers were found in a Quonset hut late Thursday.

From The Associated Press

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Help with writing is available at UMUC's Online Guide to Writing and Research
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U.S., Philippines remember WWII victory

Ceremony marks liberation of Corregidor from Japan

BY OLIVER TEVES
The Associated Press

CORREGIDOR, Philippines — Philippine and U.S. soldiers raised their flags Wednesday on Corregidor Island in ceremonies marking the 60th anniversary of the island's liberation from Japanese forces in World War II. On March 2, 1945, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the wartime commander of allied forces in the Pacific, raised the American flag on Corregidor, three years after he was ordered to leave it as the Japanese were invading the Philippines, then a U.S. colony.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, U.S. Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, and the envoys of Britain, Australia and New Zealand — wartime allies of the United States — offered wreaths at the Pacific War Memorial, where a brief program was held beside ruins of U.S. garrisons.

Both Day Romulo, president of the Corregidor Foundation, recalled "that glorious day when Corregidor Island was finally retaken" following 14 days of fierce combat between Japanese and U.S. forces, including paratroopers from the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team.

Military historians say of 6,550 Japanese soldiers on the island, only 50 survived. The paratroopers lost 169 men.

Romulo said Corregidor, also known as "The Rock" and now a tourist destination, should be preserved as a "dramatic reminder of the horrors of war and the courage of those who lived and died here."

Ricciardone said commemorating the sacrifices of U.S. and Filipino soldiers was an opportunity "to rededicate ourselves to paying that same price they paid to upholding ever and always the cause of freedom and democracy" by strengthening alliances "including some of those who were our adversaries in World War II."

The Americans held a separate ceremony for the paratroopers attended by Maj. Gen. Elbert N. Perkins, commander of the U.S. Army Japan and 9th Theater Support Command.

The 503rd Veterans Association said in a message read by Ricciardone: "The sons of America, like their fathers and grandfathers, face a new war, a war against extremist terrorism."

"Once again, good men — our best and brightest — struggle so that others may live in liberty," it said.

About 20 Filipino and American soldiers made a parachute jump on Corregidor. The Japan-based 26th U.S. Army Band played marching and memorial hymns.

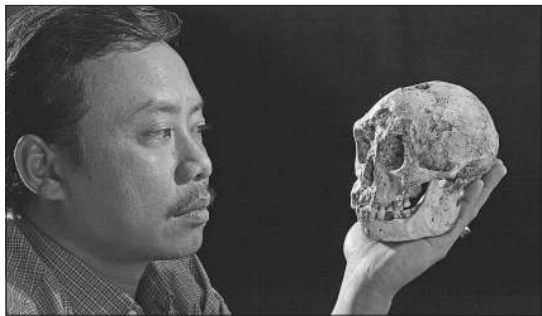
Only a handful of aging Filipino World War II veterans were present. A U.S. Embassy staffer said invitations were sent to U.S. veterans, but none came.

Ricardo Catanan, a Filipino civilian with the U.S. engineering corps that provided logistics to U.S. and Filipino forces on Batan and Corregidor, felt honored by the ceremonies.

"We are proud that our sacrifice has been recognized," the 86-year-old former U.S. Air Force auditor said.



With the ruins of the American barracks in the background, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo salutes during rites Wednesday marking the 60th anniversary of the raising of the U.S. flag by Gen. Douglas MacArthur that signaled the liberation of Corregidor Island from Japanese forces, 26 miles west of Manila.



Thomas Sutikna of the Indonesian Centre for Archaeology in Jakarta, Indonesia, holds a skull that he and fellow scientists believe represents a new human species, Homo floresiensis.

Scientists: 'Hobbit' fossil could reveal new species

The Associated Press

DENVER — Scientists working with powerful imaging computers say the spectacular "Hobbit" fossil recently discovered in Indonesia had distinctive brain features that could justify its classification as a separate — and tiny — human ancestor.

The new report, published Thursday in the online journal Science Express, seems to support the idea of a human dwarf species marooned for eons while modern man spread across the planet.

Detractors of the theory, however, said the computer models were unconvincing.

The new research produced a computer-generated model that compared surface impressions on the inside of the fossil skull with brain casts of modern and ancient humans, as well as chimps and other primates. The scientists said the model shows that the 3-foot specimen, nicknamed Hobbit, had a brain unlike anything they had seen before in recent human lineage. The brain is chimpanzee in size.

Despite being up to two-thirds smaller than a modern human brain, the Hobbit fossil's brain shared wrinkled surface features with the brains of both modern humans and Homo erectus, tool-making human ancestors that lived more than 1 million years ago, the researchers said. Some of those features are consistent with higher cognitive traits, they report.

At the same time, they said the Hobbit brain was different from the brain of a modern human pygmy or a human with abnormal brain growth.

"This is something new," said Florida State University anthropologist Dean Falk, who led the study. "This discovery has flummoxed the field of anthropology."

In October, scientists from Indonesia and Australia caused an international sensation with their report of a trove of fossils found in a cave on the equatorial island of Flores.

Wrist video keeps info at Israel's finger tips

The Associated Press

HOLON, Israel — Israeli troops now are sporting gear that Dick Tracy would be proud of: tiny video screens, worn on the wrist, which display video shot by unmanned airplanes.

Similar screens have been in use for close to a year in the Israeli military's attack helicopters, helping pilots identify and strike Palestinian militants within seconds.

The technology, which also is in use in tanks and armored vehicles, was a closely guarded secret until the company that developed it offered reporters a rare glimpse at the system this week.

"We are fulfilling the science fiction movies that we see," said Itzhak Beni, chief executive of the Elitron Group of Tadiran Electronic Systems and Tadiran Spectralink companies.

Beni said the communications



An employee of Tadiran Spectralink, LTD., displays a new model of wrist-monitor south of Tel Aviv, Israel.

system has "shortened tremendously" the amount of time it takes to identify and strike a target.

Israel agreed to halt its policy of "targeted killings" under an informal cease-fire declared last month by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas. But after a Palestinian suicide bomber killed five Israelis last week, Israel said it would consider resuming the practice.

Simple care often can save babies, study finds

The Associated Press

LONDON — More than 10,000 newborns die every day in poor countries, and more than 7,000 of them could be saved by simple, cheap — and deliverable — care, according to research announced Thursday.

While global attention has focused on improving the health of mothers and children in the developing world, the fate of the newborn has fallen through the gap, according to analysis papers to be published in coming weeks in

The Lancet medical journal.

Almost 40 percent of the annual 10 million deaths of children under age 5 occur in the first month of life. That's more than the number of people who die of AIDS each year, and experts say it's an "unconscious" statistic for the 21st century.

Nearly 3 million of those babies could be saved by such simple interventions as tetanus shots, breast-feeding and sanitary conditions during delivery, as well as basic hospital emergency services, according to the research.

IN THE STATES

No place like home'

Stewart returns to N.Y. after 5 months in prison

The Associated Press

KATONAH, N.Y. — Martha Stewart strolled outdoors with her dog and fed her horses Friday morning, hours after returning from prison to the multi-million-dollar estate where she will remain under the watch of federal authorities while trying to revive her homemaking empire.

Before her five-month stay in prison, Stewart lamented that she would miss her beloved pets and hoped to be free in time for her cherished spring gardening.

On a cold late-winter morning, she emerged from her home wearing a light-colored coat, dark pants and boots, but no gloves. Stewart walked with a companion and a red Chow to a snowy paddock. She handed treats over the fence to five horses and caressed their muzzles, then turned to wave to journalists before heading inside again.

Stewart was driven to the 153-acre estate 40 miles north of midtown Manhattan after landing about 2 a.m. at Westchester County Airport in a private jet. She later was seen walking around inside her home with her daughter, Alexis.

For the next five months, Stewart must wear an electronic ankle so authorities can track her

every move. But she is allowed to receive her \$900,000 salary again and can leave home for up to 48 hours a week to work, shop or run other approved errands.

Her journey home began about 12:30 a.m. Friday, when two dark-windowed sport utility vehicles slipped away from the woman's prison in Alderson, W.Va., and drove to a nearby airport.

There, Stewart smiled and waved to supporters as she walked across the runway and boarded the plane for New York.

"The experience of the last five months... has been life altering and life affirming," Stewart said in a statement issued on her Web site. "Someday, I hope to have the chance to talk more about all that has happened, the extraordinary people I have met here and all that I have learned."

Stewart, 63, who also has homes in Connecticut, Maine and the Hamptons, chose the Katonah estate, which she bought in 2000 for \$16 million, to be her prison until August.

Besides running Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia Inc. and writing a column for her magazine, Stewart can prepare for the two television shows in which she'll be starring: a revival of her daily homemaking show and her version of NBC's "The Apprentice" hosted by development billionaire Donald Trump.

"Right now, as you can imagine, I am thrilled to be returning to my more familiar life," Stewart said in the statement. "My heart is filled with joy at the prospect of the warm embraces of my family, friends and colleagues. Certainly, there is no place like home."

During her time at the federal women's camp in Alderson, Stewart took on inmate rights, saying her fellow prisoners risked falling into a "severe depression" because of false hopes raised by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling striking down federal sentencing guidelines. Her own sentence, however, was ruled "reasonable" in light of that ruling.



Martha Stewart spends time with her horses at her home in Katonah, N.Y., on Friday. Stewart must spend the next five months in home confinement at her \$16 million New York estate here.



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Supporting Martha

Fans trek to W. Va. to show love

BY APRIL VITELLO
AND KELLEY SCHOONOVER
The Associated Press

ALDERSON, W. Va. — People really love Martha!

Kathy Herrmann underwent chemotherapy treatment in her hometown of Tacoma, Wash., on Wednesday, but it didn't stop her from flying across the country to see Martha Stewart as she left a federal prison in West Virginia early Friday.

"I'm tired, but it meant enough for me to come out here anyway," Herrmann said. "It's all about support."

Herrmann and several friends gathered at the Greenbrier Valley Airport in 16-degree weather holding a Martha Stewart-brand floral print sheet covered with signatures from Seattle-area fans. About 50 other fans joined them, many of whom screamed Stewart's name and waved as she boarded the plane.

Stewart was convicted last year in a Manhattan court of lying about a 2001 stock sale and was sentenced to serve five months at the federal women's camp in Alderson.

Hattie Hopkins, a former minister at the Alderson prison, said she was used to seeing high-profile inmates at the minimum-se-

curity facility, but "it wasn't as exciting as" Stewart's stay and departure.

"She's been a blessing to the prison and a blessing to the girls there," Hopkins said.

But not everyone in the crowd was a fan. Some came to experience the moment itself.

"I came down just because it's history. I'm definitely not a fan," said Lisa Huff of Bluefield, Va., about 65 miles away. Huff said, however, the prison stay may have changed her opinion of Stewart.

"When she went in, I thought she was mean. But when she decided to go to jail, now she looks more contrite," she said. "I think jail has been great for her."

One of the tasks ahead of Stewart is spinning the goodwill she gained in prison into profits for her Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia Inc. Despite high stock prices, the company posted a loss last year.

William Parr, 66, of Amherst, Va., said Stewart will rebound because she has the "Midastouch."

"I live this lady. I've followed her for the last 20 years," said Parr, who drove about 100 miles to see Stewart. "She has definitely got her act together on the home front."

Calif. trial in deaths of 9 children starts

BY JULIANA BARBASSA

The Associated Press

FRESNO, Calif. — A man charged with slaughtering nine of his children and stacking their bodies in his home went on trial, with prosecutors portraying him as a controlling figure who had sex with some of his daughters and beat the youngsters with baseball bats.

Marcus Wesson, 57, also demanded his children study the Bible for hours a day and forced his daughters to wear dresses and cover their heads at all times, prosecutor Lisa Gamoian said Thursday in her opening statement.

Wesson could get the death penalty if convicted of murdering the children, ages 1 to 25. Gamoian said all but one were shot through the right eye with a 22-caliber handgun. The 1-year-old was shot in the left eye.

Wesson's attorney, Pete Jones, has argued in court papers that his client's daughter Sebhrenah shot the victims, then killed herself. He noted that Wesson did not have gunshot residue on his hands when he was arrested.

Gamoian told the jury that investigators found no identifiable prints on the gun and said there was no gunshot residue on the victims either.

Tests determined Sebhrenah's DNA was on the weapon found beneath her body.

Outlining Wesson's secretive life, Gamoian described how his family grew from a relationship started with a woman 30 years ago.

At the age of 27, Wesson impregnated and married the woman's 14-year-old daughter, she said.

Over the years, Wesson fathered several children, first with his wife, then with his own daughters and nieces, prosecutors allege.

Wesson was the only one to emerge alive last March from the back bedroom of the modest one-story house after a tense,

hours-long standoff with police. Officers discovered the nine bodies in a bloody tangle and 10 white coffins stacked against the living room walls.

On the day of the killings, several family members had tried to retrieve their children from the Wesson household, Gamoian said. The conflict escalated, and they called the police for help, crying hysterically and saying that Wesson was dangerous.

One of the women, 28-year-old Sofina Solario, was able to see her child briefly before she was shoved aside and Wesson retreated into the home.

"That's the last time she saw her son alive," Gamoian said.



Kiani Wesson, daughter of murderer defendant Marcus Wesson, shields her face from the media on Tuesday as she walks to the courthouse in Fresno, Calif.

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8-year-old arrested

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — Police arrested an 8-year-old boy who allegedly had a violent outburst in school, head-butting his teacher and kicking an assistant principal, when he was told he couldn't go outside to play with other students.

The 4-foot pupil was led away from Rawls Byrd Elementary School in handcuffs Tuesday and charged with disorderly conduct and assault and battery.

Maj. Stan Stout said the chair-tossing, desk-turning outburst occurred after a teacher, and later the assistant principal, attempted to stop the boy from joining his classmates.

The child was later released to his parents.

Teacher assault charges

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — A 37-year-old middle school teacher has been charged with having sex with four children under age 16.

Police in central West Virginia filed eight charges of third-degree sexual assault against the woman, Toni Lynn Woods. A criminal complaint said she had confessed, but did not give genders or specific ages of the students.

Woods, who taught sixth grade at Braxton County Middle School, has resigned and surrendered her teaching certificate, according to county prosecutor William C. Martin. She was being held on \$100,000 bail.

Cops find teacher dead

JACKSONVILLE — A high school science teacher who failed to show up at school for two days was found dead in his home along with a marijuana-growing operation.

Police who went to check on 55-year-old Terry Hannabas found him dead in the bathroom. Foul play is not suspected, but authorities have not determined a cause of death.

Police found marijuana growing in two bedrooms of the house. They seized 76 marijuana plants, scales, an odor elimination device, rolling papers, a bong, several pipes and three tanks of carbon dioxide.

Hannabas worked for the school district for 21 years, said Brenda English, a spokeswoman for the Duval County schools.

From The Associated Press

Chimps shot after attacking visitors

BY KIM CURTIS

The Associated Press

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. — A couple's plans for a birthday party for their former pet chimpanzee turned tragic when two other chimps at an animal sanctuary escaped from their cage and attacked. The man was critically injured with massive wounds to his face, body and limbs, and the attacking animals were shot dead.

St. James and LaDonna Davis were at the Animal Haven Ranch in Caliente to celebrate the birthday of Moe, a 39-year-old chimpanzee who was taken from their suburban Los Angeles home in 1999 after biting off part of a woman's finger.

Moe was not involved in the attack, said Steve Martarano, a spokesman for the California Department of Fish and Game.

The couple had brought Moe a cake and were standing outside his cage when Buddy and Ollie, two of four chimpanzees in the adjoining cage, attacked St. James Davis, Martarano said. Officials have not determined how the

chimps got out of their enclosure, he said.

LaDonna Davis, 64, suffered a bite wound to the hand while trying to help her 62-year-old husband, Martarano said.

The son-in-law of the sanctuary's owner killed the attacking animals, Martarano said.

"He saw what was happening and had one kind of weapon with him and then got another he felt would be more substantial and shot them," Martarano said. "He pretty much saved a life."

St. James Davis had severe facial injuries and would require extensive surgery in an attempt to reattach his nose, Dr. Maureen Martin of Kern Medical Center told KGET-TV of Bakersfield. His testicles and a foot also were severed, Kern County Sheriff's Cmdr. Hal Chealander told The Bakersfield Californian.

Davis was transported to Loma Linda University Medical Center, where he was undergoing surgery late Thursday, Martarano said.

Buddy, a 16-year-old male chimp, initiated the attack and after he was shot, Ollie, a



SOURCE: ESRI

13-year-old male, grabbed the gravely injured man and dragged him down the road, authorities said.

"Everybody was trying to get the chimp off," Chealander said.

Two other chimps, females named Susie and Bones, also escaped from the cage they shared with Ollie and Buddy, prompting sheriff's deputies, animal control workers, and Fish and Game officials to launch a search.

The wayward pair were recovered by Animal Haven owner Virginia Brauer after five hours.

Martarano said one chimp was two miles from the sanctuary, located 25 miles southeast of Bakersfield.

The Davises had waged an unsuccessful legal fight to bring Moe back to their West Covina home and visited him regularly at the sanctuary where he had been living since October. They brought the chimp from Africa decades ago after a poacher killed his mother.

Feds release results of 2-year probe into R.I. nightclub blaze

BY BROOKE DONALD

The Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Sarah Mancini knew her son had probably died quickly in the 2003 nightclub fire that took 100 lives and injured scores more.

On Thursday, she learned just how fast the club became a deadly firetrap — and what could've been done to save more lives, including that of her 34-year-old son, Keith.

Releasing the results of their two-year probe, federal investigators found it took only 90 seconds for flames to race along the club's foam-laden ceiling and walls, releasing thick smoke and creating temperatures about nine times hotter than needed to boil water.

None inside the West Warwick club at that point could have survived, according to the report by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

"They didn't stand a chance," Mancini said.

The institute said sprinklers would've allowed more people to get out of the club, and urged all nightclubs to install them.

The recommendation was one of 12 included in the report.

The Feb. 20, 2003, fire at The Station started when sparks from a rock band's pyrotechnics ignited flammable foam used in the club as soundproofing. The blaze was the fourth deadliest nightclub fire in U.S. history.

NIST, which is part of the U.S. Commerce Department, recreated the conditions in the club to help officials understand how to improve building safety codes, standards and practices. The agency has no regulatory authority and does not assign blame, but believes if its recommendations are adopted, future tragedies may be prevented.

Besides sprinklers, the institute said nightclubs should have to follow tighter rules on using flammable materials; improve exits, such as widening doorways; and have additional portable fire extinguishers. It also recommended improving fire inspection programs.

According to the report, sprinklers would have contained much of the blaze within 25 seconds and also kept the temperature in the club at around 77 degrees. During the fire, the temperature inside the club reached 1,800 degrees within 90 seconds.

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Herbal remedies starting to fit in

By CARLA K. JOHNSON

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Standing inside a downtown Chicago chain drugstore, shopper Beth McClanahan considered the product Zicam.

"I wouldn't have known it was homeopathic," she said looking at the bright orange label. "The name Zicam sounds very scientific."

Stuffy noses and sore throats are driving many cold sufferers to herbal and homeopathic remedies. But like McClanahan, consumers may not realize they're buying alternative medicines when they choose wildly popular products such as Airborne and Zicam — both shelved alongside traditional medicines in the cold and flu aisles of chain drugstores.

The makers of both medicines have paid for their own clinical studies to test their products. But Airborne and Zicam have not been reviewed for safety and effectiveness by the Food and Drug Administration, unlike prescription and new over-the-counter drugs.

The law allows their sale unless the FDA proves them harmful.

That concerns some experts.

"I think it's quite confusing for consumers to sort out what they actually work," said Dr. Ronald B. Turner, a cold virus expert at the University of Virginia School of Medicine in Charlottesville.

Zicam and other homeopathic products do say on their packaging that they

are homeopathic. Zicam, which contains a small amount of zinc, is the nation's third leading nasal spray. Airborne — plugged on Oprah Winfrey's show last fall — is an effervescent tablet containing Chinese herbs, vitamins and echinacea. Its label notes that the FDA has not reviewed its language saying it should be taken at the first sign of cold symptoms.

Last month, the Institute of Medicine, citing the popularity of dietary supplements, called for tougher rules to make sure they're safe and effective.

Steven Dentali of the American Herbal Products Association says his group wants new safety requirements such as mandatory reporting of adverse side effects.

Dogs want organ swap program

CHICAGO — Kidney transplant specialists pushed Thursday for a national organ swap program that they say could be lifesaving for thousands of ailing patients on transplant waiting lists.

The swap, already done at about 30 U.S. hospitals, would involve patients who need transplants and have relatives or friends willing to donate but whose kidneys aren't a match.

Each patient-donor pair would be matched with another pair to allow reciprocal transplants.

Creating a national "paired kidney exchange" would allow transplants for about half the 6,000 U.S. patients yearly who have willing donors with incompatible kidneys because of different blood types or other reasons, said Dr. Robert Montgomery, director of Johns Hopkins University's Comprehensive Transplant Center.

From The Associated Press

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Case tests Texas law meant to protect unborn

Teens' respective roles in ending pregnancy incites criticism of legislation

BY LISA FALKENBERG

The Associated Press

LUFKIN, Texas — The would-be teen mother arrived by ambulance last May, her belly bruised, the twin fetuses she carried for five months gone and her lips tightly sealed.

Authorities assumed 16-year-old Erica Basoria had been beaten, and charged her boyfriend, 18-year-old Gerardo "Jerry" Flores, with murder under a new Texas state law protecting the unborn.

But Basoria told authorities she had been trying to kill the fetuses for weeks — and finally asked Flores to help by stepping on her stomach.

Now Flores faces murder charges — but Basoria can't be charged because the new law, like many others across the United States, bans prosecution of mothers on the grounds that they have a legal right to end pregnancies.

The case has attorneys on both

sides questioning the fairness of the law.

"How can two people conspire to do something like this and only one of them be punished? How can that be fair?" defense attorney Ryan Deaton asked.

Prosecutor Clyde Herrington said it was startling that "they completely leave the female out of the criminal penalty."

"It doesn't seem entirely fair," Herrington said.

The couple had been dating just over a year when Basoria became pregnant in January 2004. Flores, a senior in his last year of high school who was pursuing a soccer scholarship, said he offered to delay college a year until Basoria graduated.

The pregnancy changed everything. Both were scared. Neither had a job. And there were two babies.

Basoria didn't return calls for comment, but wrote in an affidavit that her family encouraged an abortion: "They said I was too

young to have children."

Flores' mother, Norma, shunned the idea, saying: "It's a life that wants to live."

At four months, when the mirror betrayed her first bulge, Basoria wanted out. She feigned taking prenatal vitamins and jogged when she wasn't supposed to.

"About two weeks before the miscarriage, I started hitting myself," Basoria wrote in an affidavit. "I would do this every other day and I would use both of my fists when I did this. I would hit myself 10 or more times."

Then she turned to her boyfriend.

"I said I didn't want to do it," Flores recalled. But she kept pleading, he said, until he agreed to step on her.

The night of the miscarriage, the couple fought. Later, he awoke to Basoria's screams and found her crying and bleeding on the toilet. Flores' mother and sister went to the hospital and Flores stayed behind, cleaning up

the blood and returning to bed.

Flores since has been charged with capital murder, though prosecutors aren't seeking the death penalty. He remains in jail, awaiting a trial date.

"Murder sounds like when you go out there and kill somebody."

"But the baby's unborn," said Flores' sister, Maira. "It would have been different if they were born already and he killed them." A co-author of the state law said it was intended to protect women and unborn babies from domestic violence, drunken drivers and other assaults.

"I feel sad for these immature, stupid people. But the law is what the law is," said Congressman Roy Allen, a Republican.

Roger Enriquez, a criminal justice professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio, said prosecutors should consider the couple's ages.

"This is a classic case here of individuals who are not mature



Gerardo "Jerry" Flores is detained in the Angelina County Jail, in Lufkin, Texas. He is charged with murder under a new law protecting the unborn.

enough to make these decisions on their own," he said.

Flores still calls Basoria regularly and says they may get back together if he gets out. "She feels bad. I forgive her. She'll do anything to help me out."

BTK, other serial killers often keep trophies

BY MATT SEDENSKY

The Associated Press

WICHITA, Kansas — The Baton Rouge serial killer met off with a silver toe ring. Jeffrey Dahmer kept rotted body parts. And the serial killer known as BTK held on to jewelry, driver's licenses and photographs.

The things that serial killers take from their crime scenes are not meaningless mementos. Those who study the cases say such trophies are important in understanding how BTK may have gone years without satisfying his hunger to murder.

BTK suspect Dennis L. Rader, 59, a churchgoing Boy Scout leader who is married with two children, is charged with 10 slayings between 1974 and 1991.

Many contend the serial killer — who gave himself the nickname BTK, short for "Bind, Torture, Kill" — is responsible for even more murders.

The timeline of the BTK killings has gaps as long as eight years and a 14-year reprieve between the last linked death and Rader's arrest.

But experts agree that regardless of the time between a serial killer's murders, his fantasies can be satisfied with a glimpse of his trophies.

"They can try to recreate that thrill of dominating

and killing somebody," said Marilyn Bardsley, a serial killer expert.

Police haven't said if they've confiscated anything from Rader's house that may have belonged to a BTK victim. Over the years, though, BTK's mailings to authorities and the media have included tokens from his victims' homes.

From Nancy Fox, a 1977 victim, the killer lifted a driver's license. At other crime scenes, he filched jewelry, some of which he later sent to a local television station. When Vicki Wegerle was killed in 1986, BTK snapped pictures of her body in various positions.

"The way he was taunting police, he was reliving the killing from a long time ago," said Steven Egger, a criminologist at the University of Houston-Clear Lake who wrote a book on serial murderers, "The Killers Among Us."

Still, Bardsley said the enjoyment trophies can bring is no replacement for actually killing again.

"That thrill wears off," she said.



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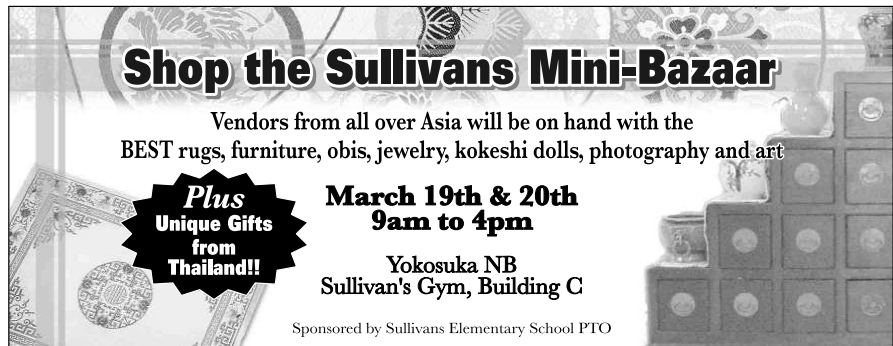
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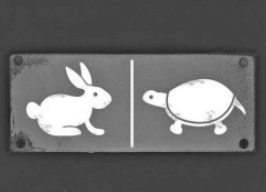


RELIGION

Seventh Day Slumber shows softer side of rock

Like fellow Christian rockers Seventh Day Slumber, rock/pop band the Afters decided to play their soft for their first single release from new album "I Wish We All Could Win." (INO records)

THE AFTERS | I WISH WE ALL COULD WIN



BY BRIAN BOWERS

Stars and Stripes

Seventh Day Slumber likes its rock hard. However, the band turned to one of its less-aggressive tracks for its initial single from the new CD "Once Upon a Shattered Life."

The move appears to have worked because the rock ballad "Caroline" is climbing R&R's Christian Rock radio chart. The song portrays God forgiving someone you might call the "prodigal daughter." It describes how "yesterday is gone and everything that made you cry has fallen to the

ground. I'm here to bring you home."

It's one of many songs that draws on the experience of the band members, notably frontman Joseph Rojas, who once had a \$400 a day cocaine habit.

The disc is packed with powerful portraits of a brokenness that leads to redemption and hope.

Today's praise

"Broken Me" is a prayer for a relationship with God that failed dreams but looks ahead to a different future. "Shattered" asks, "Will you rescue me and take me from this shattered life?" One of the most powerful songs on the disc is "Back in Time," a prayer for a relationship with God that

states, "I want to breathe hope instead of choking. I want to feel the fire deep inside."

Other songs are more praise-oriented, such as "Believe," a deep and meaningful statement of faith, and "Oceans from the Rain," which conveys amazement at God's power, consistency and love.

Seventh Day Slumber's first release in the BEC label is rock solid.

On the Web: www.seventhday-slumber.com.

Another band that went mellow for an initial release is the Afters, a pop/rock band that will spend the spring opening for MercyMe and Jeremy Camp.

The first single from "I Wish We All Could Win" is "You," a praise ballad that's planted at No. 11 on R&R's Christian airplay chart.

These four guys from Texas offer everything a good pop/rock band should, catchy riffs, good hooks and heart-felt lyrics. What sets their disc apart from recent releases by similar bands is the creativity they display as they explore their themes.

For example, "You" uses simple and effective terms to convey the nature of a relationship with God. "The Way You Are" covers similar ground but with power chords and in-your-face metaphors — "It's like atomic bombs in reverse. As if a glass could contain the sea, that's the way you are in me." And "Someday," which gives the disc its title, opens as an acoustic ballad before exploding with energy as it expresses the wish that everyone could find the right path.

The Afters got their big break when they caught the attention of Bart Millard, frontman for MercyMe, and became the first band to sign with his new Simple Records label. From all appearances, they deserve their shot and are making the most of it.

On the Web: www.theafters.com.

Today's Praise is a roundup of news and reviews from the contemporary Christian music industry. It appears on the Religion page.

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Sonny Savoie, center, a member of the National School Board Association's Board of Directors from St. Charles Parish, bows his head in prayer Thursday before the opening session of the Louisiana School Board Association Convention in Alexandria, La.

La. school board defies court ruling with prayer

BY DOUG SIMPSON
The Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, La. — All over Louisiana, school board meetings start with the Pledge of Allegiance and a quick prayer. It's been that way as long as anyone remembers.

Members of Louisiana's 68 public school boards entered the second day of their annual convention here Friday, still puzzled over a recent federal court ruling saying those prayers are unconstitutional. Some defended the practice as an expression of faith; others said it's just a tradition worth protecting.

Board members from the state's biggest cities and tiniest farming villages agreed: There's no sense in giving up their prayer. "It's a tradition — like roll call," said Jason Pitre, a member of the board in Calcasieu Parish, in southwest Louisiana.

Gov. Kathleen Blanco, a Democrat who has spoken out in defense of the prayers, is on the Friday program to speak to the convention.

The convention began Thurs-

day in defiance: A board member stood at a podium and prayed to God for guidance to make "decisions that affect our children, to the best of our ability." The audience of about 200 answered with "Amen."

Freddie Whitford, chief of the Louisiana School Boards Association, stood at the microphone and said: "Let it be known, and let the ACLU know, that this meeting started with the Pledge and a prayer."

Most in the audience got the point: Louisiana's branch of the American Civil Liberties Union backed the lawsuit that led to last week's ruling by U.S. District Judge Ginger Berrigan, who followed the precedent set by the Cincinnati-based 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that the prayers are unconstitutional because they breach the line between church and state.

The school board association has already said it will file supporting arguments to oppose the ruling, when the Tangipahoa Parish School Board appeals to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

BY GARY TANNER
The Associated Press

DOVER, Tenn. — With black bows attached to the front of every school bus, all Stewart County drivers ran their usual routes Thursday morning, one day after a beloved co-worker was shot and killed while picking up students.

The drivers completed their routes without incident, said transportation director Francis Carson, but some were worried about getting back behind the wheel.

"I have small children, and they have been asking questions: 'Do you have to do this?'" substitute bus driver Michele Etherton said.

The black bows had the number "22" on them, a reminder of the bus Joyce Gregory drove for two years. Police say a 14-year-old high school freshman fatally shot Gregory with a .45-caliber handgun, apparently one day after he was reported for using smokeless tobacco on the bus.



THE LEAF CHRONICLE, FILE/AP

Jason Clinard, 14, is accused of shooting and killing Stewart County bus driver Joyce Gregory.

Veteran bus driver Brenda Byrd said while some drivers may have felt some hesitation about returning to work, such feelings were quickly put behind them.

"It makes all of us so sick because you think it will happen anywhere else but here," she said. "I never crossed my mind that one of my students would be

hurt. It probably never crossed Joyce's mind either."

The shooting happened just outside Cumberland City, about 50 miles northwest of Nashville. The 47-year-old married mother of two daughters was picking up students and taking them to Dover Elementary and Stewart County High School.

The 14-year-old has been identified as Jason Clinard. Police released no new details Thursday about the shooting and would not comment on a motive or where he got the weapon. He is charged with first-degree murder in Juvenile Court and he is being held without bond. He could face adult charges later.

Phillip Wallace, director of the school system, said he waived attendance requirements, understanding that children and parents were still in shock and grieving.

School transportation supervisor Eric Watkins said the bus drivers are like an extended family. "As a whole they draw off the energy of each other," Watkins said.

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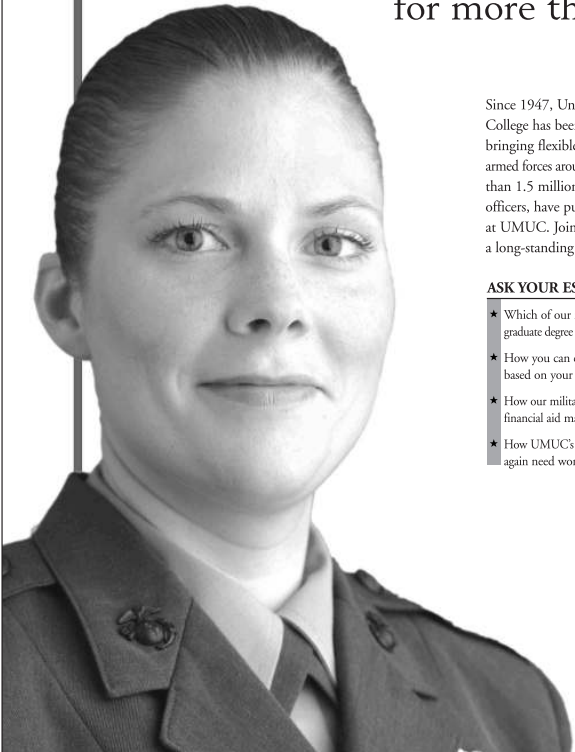


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Perpetuating the stigma

Fort Bragg, N.C.'s shootings in early February are a reminder of the four wives who were killed by their husbands at Fort Bragg in 2002, three of those four husbands having recently returned from Afghanistan.

Part of the Pentagon's plan to prevent domestic violence upon the return of divisions from Iraq and Afghanistan is to reduce the stigma of mental health care for troops seeking aid, seeking it "Overcoming stigma, dealing with trauma," article, Feb. 8).

Col. Thomas Burke, one of the Pentagon's top psychologists, says, "There is a perception among the troops that seeking mental health care means you're

weak or a coward and frankly, we in the military kind of foster that attitude."

Certainly, Lt. Gen. James Mattis has perpetuated that stigma when he told a group in San Diego recently that "It's quite fun, to fight 'em, you know. It's a hell of a boot. It's fun to shoot some people."

If a three-star general has no compunction about expressing his cavalier attitude toward war in a public forum, what are the chances subordinates in need of mental health care will seek it upon their return from a war zone?

Our Pentagon appears to be functioning at cross-purposes.

Michelle Winter
Wirzburg, Germany

Weak dollar forces Asians to choose

The Washington Post

Late last month brought a warning to economic policy-makers on both sides of the Pacific Ocean. A rumor that South Korea's central bank had decided to shift its reserves away from dollars triggered a sharp fall in the greenback and a retreat on Wall Street. The fact that the South Koreans later denied this rumor is only half-comforting. Economic logic is pushing Asia's central banks to quit propping up the dollar.

If a hollow rumor can rattle the currency, what would a real policy change do? The dollar's vulnerability reflects the nation's trade deficit. To sustain their appetite for foreign goods, Americans need to convert their dollars into other currencies, depressing the greenback's value.

This didn't stop the dollar from being strong in the 1990s, because the trade deficit was smaller then and because foreign investors were hungry for American stocks, bonds and other assets, reflecting the U.S. economy's enviable performance. But now foreign investors' appetite for dollars lags

behind Americans' demand for foreign goods and services. The gap is being filled by Asian governments, whose central banks have accumulated vast piles of U.S. bonds in an attempt to slow the dollar's slide.

A year or so ago, a fashionable theory held that this Asian government support could continue indefinitely. Asian policy-makers, according to this theory, would prop up the dollar to keep their own currencies competitive. It's true that export-led growth is a quasi-religion in East Asia and that China's dictators fear their grip on power might falter if they can't keep growth and job creation humming. But China and its neighbors have proved themselves capable of fast growth even in periods when they haven't been artificially depressing their own currencies. So it seems dangerous to bet that Asian central banks will think it worth the risk of holding ever-expanding dollar portfolios that can fatter on a rumor.

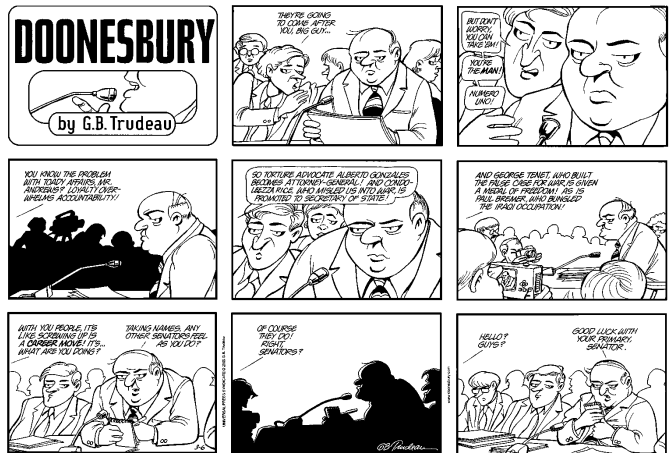
The other optimistic theory is that while Asians may not want to prop up the dollar, they are prisoners of their own policy. By now they've bought so many dollars that if

they quit buying, the value of their existing reserves would tank. But what if one central bank worries that others will stop buying dollars first? Such fears could trigger a stampede for the exit.

None of this is to say that a dollar crash is inevitable. The dollar may fall gently, as it has over the past year or so, or a renewed appetite for U.S. assets among private investors could even stabilize its value. But the risk of a currency crash grows every day.

In 2003, the United States had to attract \$530 billion of foreign capital to finance its purchases of foreign stuff; in 2004 it had to attract \$650 billion, this year, it may have to pull in as much as \$800 billion. Every year of vast borrowing increases borrowing in later years, as Bond Street's Oxford University notes, just paying interest on the \$800 billion borrowed in 2005 might add \$40 billion to the overall 2006 deficit.

To stabilize this house of cards, Congress and the administration should pull the one lever they have: They should reduce the nation's reliance on foreign capital by cutting government borrowing. This isn't going to be possible through spending cuts alone. It's going to take higher taxes.



OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Bird flu poses deadly threat Chicago Tribune

The prospect of an avian flu pandemic has served to remind the United States and the world that the forces of nature can be far more lethal than anything created by man. The World Health Organization recently warned that the risk of pandemic poses the "gravest possible danger" to the world as the virus has become "entrenched, endemic and versatile."

The U.S. isn't on the brink of an avian flu epidemic, Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reassured last week. But the experts agree it is only a matter of time before some new, virulent strain of influenza will threaten the world. The government is gearing up to test the first doses of an experimental vaccine, is stockpiling anti-viral drugs and has boosted disease surveillance. ...

What makes entirely new flu strains like the bird flu so deadly is that most people have no immunity. Humankind is virgin territory, and the virus becomes an engine of death and disease with horrific consequences. ...

We know much more about influenza now than we did then. ... All of that could slow or lessen the severity of an outbreak. But a new strain of flu has the potential to be a widespread killer.

Repeal 'don't ask, don't tell' The Miami Herald

The Pentagon policy on gays in the military, known as "don't ask, don't tell," isn't working. It hurts recruitment, impedes retention and costs too much. That's the conclusion of the just-released Government Accountability Office report that underlines the need to rethink this 12-year-old policy.

The report found that the Pentagon had to spend at least \$191 million to recruit and train replacements for some 9,500 soldiers discharged for their sexual orientation. Of that number, the GAO said, 750 held critical occupations in the military, including translators with skills in languages such as Arabic and Korean that are vital to existing U.S. security concerns. ...

Some of the discharged personnel wanted to remain in the service. More important, there is no evidence that they were causing problems. They ran afoul of the service rules because their sexual orientation became known, which, under the policy, is forbidden. ...

Perhaps "don't ask, don't tell" made sense at one time, relaxing the rule that banned homosexuality altogether. It makes no sense now. The policy should be repealed, and men and women who want to serve their country in the armed forces should be allowed to do so without regard to sexual orientation.

A case for regulation The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee

The ChoicePoint Inc. debacle, the largest case of identity theft in U.S. history, shows why we need better privacy protection nationally. What happened? Crooks posed as check-cashing companies or debt-collection firms to gain access to ChoicePoint's database of personal data about 100 million people, including names, addresses, Social Security numbers and credit reports. These 50 fake com-



panies paid fees of \$100 to \$200 to ChoicePoint, which did not verify if they were real businesses with a "legitimate business reason" to access personal financial data.

We wouldn't even know about this scandal without a 2003 California law that requires businesses to notify consumers when personal data have been accessed illegally. ChoicePoint notified 35,000 Californians but now acknowledges that at least 110,000 people outside the state were affected. ...

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission should be overseeing information firms such as ChoicePoint as it does other companies that handle financial records. Regulations that govern credit reports should apply to their databases.

And access to credit reports should be better regulated. ...

Clear Skies Act clouds reality The Wilkes-Barre, Pa., Citizen

This week, a Senate committee is preparing to vote on President Bush's Clear Skies Act — an initiative that will overhaul the nation's emission standards. Contrary to its name, Clear Skies is an industry-friendly bill that actually weakens environmental laws already on the books and relaxes controls on toxic power-plant emissions. Under current provisions of the 35-year-old Clean Air Act, mercury emissions from power plants must be reduced to 5 tons per year by 2008. Clear Skies would permit 26 tons of mercury — or five times as much — to be released each year through 2010.

... When the Clear Skies proposal was drafted in 2001 (using language largely written by representatives of the power plant industry), scientists were forbidden by the White House to commission studies or present information that might undermine the proposed changes to mercury emission standards. And last week, two national organizations that went on record in opposition to the Clear Skies Act because it is "far too lenient" were ordered to turn over their financial and tax records to the federal government. If President Bush's initiative becomes law, it would be the first time in the history of the 1970 landmark Clean Air Act that pollution rules were relaxed instead of made more stringent.

Congress must not allow our country to move backward on critical environmental issues. The health of our nation's children is too important.

Reserve troops deserve better St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times

With ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the military relies heavily on Reserve troops. Yet when those soldiers are wounded in the line of duty, too often they find they cannot rely on the military.

One of those is John Allen, an Army Special Forces team sergeant in Afghanistan, where he was seriously injured. Back home with damage to his brain, legs and vision, Allen sought a standard extension to his active-duty status so he could continue to receive medical care. Because of bureaucratic foot-dragging, however, Allen has been dropped from active duty several times, which meant that some of his medical appointments were canceled. Even his pregnant wife was refused treatment at a military hospital until a commander intervened.

In all, Allen suffered a nearly \$12,000 loss of pay and, as he described it, "intense and indescribable stress." Unfortunately, Allen's situation is far from unique.

The military has struggled to keep up with a growing reliance on Reserve troops, but unless it starts treating them better it will be difficult to attract new recruits. ...

It is a national shame, and Congress shouldn't wait for the military to get around to fixing the problem.

Bush's swelling government The Anniston (Ala.) Star

When Bill Clinton announced the "era of big government is over," soon-to-be-president George W. Bush wasn't listening. Or if he was listening, he wasn't paying attention. For today, in Washington, government is big and getting bigger. ... But instead of advancing the Gingrich-Dole agenda during his first term in office, Bush created a new Cabinet department, Homeland Security, and pushed through the USA Patriot Act that gave the government broad surveillance powers. Both of these increased the size of government and empowered Washington to oversee and regulate numerous state and individual activities.

To this, add the budget-busting Medicare prescription drug plan that will cost the nation who-knows-how-much before the decade is out. During Bush's first term, government did anything but shrink.

Fiscal conservatives and states-rights Republicans aren't buying it. Over at the Cato Institute, a conservative think-tank that usually supports the president, some

are openly hoping "that there would be an electoral rebuke of big (government) Republicans like there was when the tectonic plates shifted in 1994."

The problem with that, of course, is such a shift could erase the GOP's small majority, if the Democrats are able to turn the political tables and become the party of small ("smart" would be the better word) government and fiscal responsibility. That would require dramatically changing the public perception of the Democratic Party, but with the Bush record to run against, it could happen.

Less fodder for death row Los Angeles Times

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision Tuesday to bar the execution of juvenile murderers has come at a pivotal time in this nation's long and agonized debate over the death penalty.

Unlike in the cases of the 100-plus death row defendants released in recent years when DNA or other evidence proved them innocent, Christopher Simmons' guilt was not in doubt. Simmons was 17 and a Missouri high school junior when he and a friend entered Shirley Crook's house, bound the 46-year-old woman with duct tape, drove her to a state park and threw her from a bridge to drown in the water below. Before the crime, Simmons bragged to friends that they would "get away with it" because they were minors. Soon after his arrest, he not only confessed to Crook's murder but agreed to provide a videotaped re-enactment for police. A jury sentenced him to death.

The question before the high court was the fairness and propriety of Simmons' sentence. ... Because teens are still emotionally immature, they cannot be held responsible in the same degree as adults for their actions, however unforgivable, wrote Justice Anthony Kennedy for a sharply divided court.

The high court's new ruling comes three years after it outlawed the death penalty for the mentally retarded. Both decisions were pointedly grounded in what the court describes as a changing national consensus on capital punishment. Those decisions magnify as well as reflect the public's doubts. ... And in many other obvious inequities — name a rich person awaiting execution, for one — and death row is increasingly revealed for what it is: a dumping ground for the poorest defendants with the loudest lawyers rather than the most despicable killers.

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MILLIE FELLS

Lost trio returns

UT SALT LAKE CITY — Three eastern Utah men who disappeared in Texas, causing a multistate search, have returned home embarrassed but safe.

Len Boren, 22, Jason Iorg, 20, and Nathan Rasmussen, 22, returned to Neola late Wednesday.

They had left Vernal on Sunday morning to travel to the Houston area to go to work for a petroleum company.

The three were following another man, Troy Harris, who was to be their boss at a job site in Houston, said Wally Hendricks, Duchesne County chief deputy sheriff.

They stopped at a truck stop in Bellevue, Texas, for food and gas about 1:30 a.m. Monday. That was the last Harris saw of the trio.

Kathy Hadlock, the grandmother of one of the men, said they had gotten lost and turned around near Lubbock, Texas, and headed back to Utah.

Ugly fish saved by law

AL MONTGOMERY — Fishermen often uttered obscenities and threw their catch back in the water after hooking the long, skinny, ugly fish known as a garfish. What they probably didn't know was that, according to Alabama law, they were supposed to suddenly become the garfish's executioner.

The Alabama House passed a bill Tuesday to repeal a 1943 law requiring fishermen who catch a garfish — also called "junk fish" or "trash fish" — to kill it rather than throw it back in the water to be caught again.

Rep. Jeff McLaughlin said he's not sure why lawmakers initially wanted to kill the garfish. But he said the bill will be sponsored in part of his effort to highlight some of Alabama's archaic laws and outdated language in the state constitution.

Hypothermia death

PA WELLSBORO — A woman froze to death after wrecking her car and wandering away from the scene, authorities said.

Kathryn Maley, 41, of Wellsboro, was found dead about 3 p.m. Monday in a field approximately a mile from where her abandoned car was found crashed into a tree in Delmar Township on Saturday.

Tioga County Coroner Dr. James Wilson said that Maley appeared to have died from hypothermia, and that toxicology tests were pending.

There was no blood or other evidence that someone had been injured in the crashed car, so police did not initially look for an accident victim, Wilson said.

Vintage car scam

IN INDIANAPOLIS — A federal grand jury indicted an Indianapolis man on charges he auctioned vintage muscle cars that he did not own on the Internet site eBay, then had two partners rob would-be buyers at gunpoint when they came to pick up the autos.

Dewan A. Horne, 24, was being held Wednesday night in the Marietta County Jail. His alleged accomplices were still being sought.



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

prices were still at large, according to prosecutors.

In one of the robberies, which occurred in December and January, a father and son from Georgia and South Carolina were forced at gunpoint to lie down while Horne and his partners took more than \$9,000 in cash and equipment from their truck before leaving in Horne's car, the indictment said.

Prescription discounts

OR SALEM — A new program designed to help Oregon's seniors save money on prescription drugs has begun mailing cards to those who signed up. Program officials say thousands more are eligible. The card allows seniors to purchase prescription drugs at negotiated discount prices from participating pharmacies.

Mystery of oily birds

TX GALVESTON — More than a dozen pelicans turned up at a Galveston pier covered in oil, but baffled authorities said no spills were reported anywhere nearby.

Winston Denton, a regional biologist with the Coastal Fisheries Division of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department said some of the birds discovered Wednesday had oil covering most of their bodies but could still fly.

"It was a mixture of white and brown pelicans with varying degrees of oiling," Denton said.



Eye on the ball

Savannah Soto, 3, plays with big red ball during a visit to Recreation Park in Vilsalia, Calif., with her family.

"The ones that have a significant amount of oil on them are at risk of suffering from exposure to the weather," Denton said.

Investigators with the Texas General Land Office said Wednesday that they were unsure where the birds might have had contact with oil.

Tasteless skit

NJ CHESTERFIELD — Contractors working in New Jersey prisons will undergo special training after a skit authorized as part of a drug treatment program for inmates featured a spoof on the Ku Klux Klan.

Five employees of the Chicago-based Gateway Foundation Inc., the company whose workers approved the skit, have been fired, and the company has been cautioned that further incidents won't be tolerated, said Matthew Schuman, a spokesman for the state Department of Corrections.

"The company was told this better not happen again," he said.

Several inmates who took part in the Jan. 6 skit at the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility in Burlington County were disciplined, although Schuman would not say what that entailed.

Stranded dolphins

FL MARATHON — Some 49 dolphins stranded themselves Wednesday off the Florida Keys and more than 20 were in a nearby canal or boat channel, officials said.

The rough-tooth dolphins were on flats and sand bars about a quarter of a mile off Marathon, said Laura Engleby, a biologist with the National Marine Fisheries Service. They were in about 6 inches of water at low tide, she said.

Marine mammals may strand when they are sick, injured or disoriented, she noted. "Right now, the stranding network is busy stabilizing all the dolphins," Engleby said.

Insurance premiums up

MI DETROIT — Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan will increase its insurance premiums for group medical coverage by an average of 7 percent to 9 percent this year, officials said. Individual policy holders will face a nearly 15 percent average increase. Blue Cross says it must raise premiums to meet rising medical costs. It plans to cut its reserves by \$100 million.

Immigrant rights debate

UT SALT LAKE CITY — Immigrant rights activists are angry about a bill requiring undocumented workers to hand over their driver licenses for driving "privilege" cards. One even compared the legislation to the marking of Jews during the Holocaust.

The card, according to the bill passed Wednesday by the Legislature, could not be used as identification to board a plane, open a bank account or obtain a driver's license in another state.

It would have to be renewed annually and would be different in color than Utah's regular blue driver's license and be printed with the words "FOR DRIVING PRIVILEGES ONLY — NOT VALID FOR IDENTIFICATION."



Snow play

Krishan Chopra, 7, runs with his dog Jackie, in the front yard of their home in Oneonta, N.Y.



Where's the candy?

Tereso Bautisto takes a swing at a plaza as the De Pere High School Spanish II class hosts a bilingual kindergarten class from Nicolet Elementary School in Green Bay, Wis.



Early blossoms

As crocuses pop open on the south side of his Kalispell, Mont., home, Beau Fraleigh, 8, takes a photo of the early bloomers.



He shoots ...

Teacher Daniel Aguilar, 24, works on his basketball shot at the Kids World after-school program of the Baptist Child Development Center in Las Cruces, N.M.



Reaching to the sky

The flower stalk of an agave plant reaches skyward in Alamogordo, N.M. The stalk, which contains flowers and seed pods, can reach a height of more than 20 feet.



Windy winter drive

High winds produce blowing and drifting snow in Palmyra, N.Y., making driving treacherous on some roads.

High-tech trash can

NY NEW YORK — The city is testing a high-tech trash can that uses solar power to sense when it is full and then automatically compact the garbage inside.

The BigBelly can's tryout began Feb. 14 in Chinatown and then was moved to Tribeca on Feb. 28, city sanitation department spokeswoman Taryn Duckett said Wednesday.

Duckett said it's too early to tell whether it functions as advertised. The city decided to try out BigBelly because the manufacturer, Westborough, Mass.-based Seahorse Power Co. Inc., offered it.

Failed attempt

NM COLUMBUS — A stolen sport utility vehicle with 13 people inside — allegedly involved in a smuggling attempt — rolled over near the U.S.-Mexican border while trying to avoid police, authorities said. Four people were killed and nine were injured.

A Border Patrol agent spotted the SUV parked along a highway Wednesday afternoon, pulled behind it and turned on his emergency lights, according to Mosier.

"Border Patrol agents south of the location attempted to deploy tire deflation devices and the vehicle swerved to avoid the devices and lost control and flipped several times," said Doug Mosier, a spokesman for the U.S. Border Patrol in nearby El Paso, Texas.

High-class burglars

CA LOS ANGELES — Police have beefed up patrols in some neighborhoods like Bel-Air and Brentwood in response to a rash of burglaries over the last year that has residents on edge.

Police said nearly 250 homes were broken into on the city's affluent west side last year, well above the average. Some residents have reported losses of up to \$500,000 and hundreds have attended community meetings to discuss the thefts.

Police have added veteran investigators to a burglary task force and officers are analyzing images captured by video cameras at two entrances to Bel-Air.

Two arrests have been made and police have recovered some loot, including dozens of rings, watches, coins and a pair of cufflinks in the shape of Bob Hope's profile.

Paddling violation

OH WARREN — A former township police chief convicted of paddling teenage boys for minor traffic violations received a nine-month suspended sentence. James Martin, 52, was convicted last month of 18 misdemeanor charges in which he paddled boys as part of an unsanctioned diversion program in Fowler Township. Parents approved the paddling.

'Beaten up' faculty

CO BOULDER — University of Colorado professors, even those who have nothing to do with Ward Churchill, say they're feeling "beaten up."

The lightning-rod professor ignited controversy with an essay on the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

He's also under fire for allegations of academic fraud and taking a shortcut to tenure.

Calls by lawmakers for his dismissal and an examination of tenure have other faculty members saying their own freedom of speech — and their reputations — are threatened.

"It's tarnishing everyone else's image," said education professor Margaret LeCompte, who signed a full-page ad in today's Boulder Daily Camera newspaper supporting academic freedom.

Preventing fraud

WV CHARLESTON — The state Division of Motor Vehicles is rolling out a high-tech driver's license later this year in an attempt to reduce fraud. The new license will include fingerprint images, face-recognition technology and other security features.

Commissioner Doug Stump says all 21 DMV regional offices should have the new technology by October.

Former professor jailed

PA PHILADELPHIA — A former University of Pennsylvania professor and noted researcher in brain injury was sentenced to house arrest Wednesday for drugging a woman, then having sex with her against her will.

Prosecutors had sought a prison term of at least five years for Tracy McIntosh, former head of the university's Head Injury Center.

He pleaded no contest to sexual assault and drug charges late last year. Afterward, the university asked for his resignation.

Judge Rayford Means sentenced McIntosh to 11½ to 20 months, and said he may serve his time under house arrest.

Mom gives up kids

TX HOUSTON — A baby left station at a Houston fire station will be placed with her aunt if the home is determined suitable, a judge has determined.

The mother of the baby, who said in court Wednesday that she felt out of options when she gave up her 1-month-old daughter a day earlier, also agreed to place her and 7-year-old children with her sister.

Meanwhile, the mother of the children will undergo a psychological evaluation.

"I just felt stressed trying to do everything by myself," the woman said during an emergency hearing to determine placement of the baby.

BB gun shooting

FL JENSEN BEACH — A sheriff's deputy shot a man twice after the man allegedly pointed a BB gun at the deputy several times, saying he "did not want to go back to prison."

Deputy Angelo Minella, a veteran with more than 10 years of service, fired five rounds from a pistol at Kenneth Serge Nelson Herbert, 43, hitting him twice, said Sgt. Jennell Atlas, sheriff's spokeswoman.

Herbert sustained injuries that did not appear to be life-threatening, Atlas said.

Photos and stories from wire services

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YOUR MONEY



Washington Post photo

Army Capt. Lonnie Moore, right, works out with 1st Lt. Stephen Rice during a physical therapy workout at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. Both men were wounded in Iraq. Moore, of Wichita, Kan., says he has already received a few job offers, but will remain at Walter Reed through March.

Wanted: Injured vets to fill job vacancies

BY ELLEN MCCARTHY

The Washington Post

Recovering troops in high demand among contractors

Army Capt. Lonnie Moore lost his right leg and — he thought — his career last April when his convoy was ambushed on the road to Ramadi, in central Iraq. The injury led to some dark days at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington as Moore, 29, began his recuperation and contemplated life outside the military.

Within months, however, he had received job offers from a munitions company, an information technology firm and the Department of Veterans Affairs. And that's without sending out a résumé.

"People tend to seek us out," Moore said of veterans, particularly those who have been injured. "They know we'll be an asset to their companies and that we're not going to let our injuries stand in the way.... Everybody I've known that's gotten out, they're not having a hard time finding jobs."

Through broad initiatives and individual requests, corporations have been actively recruiting veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, turning military hospitals like Walter Reed into de facto hiring centers.

Job offers aren't being handed out carte blanche, and companies say talent and fit are still the priorities. But executives seeking out wounded troops say many of the skills acquired in the military are applicable in the private sector — particularly within companies that serve the government. A soldier who has led a platoon into war is probably capable of leading a unit at a private company, executives say. With government contracting in a boom, soldiers' security clearances and knowledge are also highly valued.

"They've got to be able to talk the language. And you can't teach a person that

language — it's a language you can only learn by being part of that culture," said Paul Evancoe, director of military operations at FNH USA Inc., a McLean, Va., weapons manufacturer with about 350 employees in the United States. The company is among those interested in hiring Moore.

The quest to seek an injured vet was both company-driven and personal, said Evancoe, who received a Purple Heart after being shot in Vietnam. Many FNH employees are veterans, so the company's atmosphere and values largely mirror that of the military, he added.

"If you take a guy and immerse him back into that culture... it's going to be very positive. It's going to help the heal-

ing," Evancoe said. "It's not like I can hire every single guy, but when I have a job, I'm going to search out a veteran."

The Labor Department does not have statistics on job placement rates of veterans disabled in Afghanistan or Iraq. However, in 2003, the most recent statistics available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, veterans had an unemployment rate of 4.5 percent, compared with 5.9 percent for nonveterans.

The same study found that 9 percent of veterans suffered from a service-related disability; their unemployment rate was comparable to that of their noninjured peers.

Jeannie Lehowicz, a vocational counselor

at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, said she has a steady stream of inquiries from executives and recruiters — sometimes dozens a week, and typically more than the 50 to 75 servicemembers she is working with at any given time.

One day the call might be from a giant defense contractor from Bethesda, Md., and the next, a small biomedical firm from Montana, she said.

"It's overwhelming. You want to respond and say 'Oh here's this guy I've got for you,' but that's not always the case," Lehowicz said.

The organizers of a career fair at Walter Reed in December expected a dozen or so companies to participate. By the night of the fair, more than 30 companies, including BAE Systems PLC, Science Applications International Corp. and Oracle Corp., had set up booths to pass out brochures and collect names.

"The equipment that we work on and maintain for the military is the same as they would have used," said Eugene C. Renzi, president of defense systems at ManTech International Corp., a Fairfax, Va., government contractor that sent recruiters to the career fair. "So when they get out of the military, we can put them right to work and utilize the skills they already have."

Joe Davis, spokesman for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said outreach efforts among government contractors is partly driven by executives with military backgrounds. There is a de facto alumni network, he said, and a collective memory of the way disabled veterans were treated after previous conflicts, particularly Vietnam.

SEE VETERANS ON PAGE 27



"Veterans are getting good jobs right now," says Army Capt. Lonnie Moore, who lost his leg last year. Sgt. Robert Faulk, a physical therapy assistant, helps with his recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

YOUR MONEY

Use credit to boost score

Q: My mother pays for most large purchases with cash. She wrote checks to buy three cars in the last year — two luxury cars and a sport utility vehicle — yet according to lenders, she has bad credit.

A: Why do people like her, who use credit cards only for emergencies and then pay them off at the end of the month, get penalized when they want to buy something big like a house?

A: Your mother may not have bad credit. What she does have is a credit history that's too thin to generate a three-digit credit score.

The FICO scoring formula requires a consumer to have at least one account on her credit report that's been open a minimum of six months and at least one account to be updated in the previous six months.

This requirement can make it tough for young people and immigrants to establish credit, because many lenders won't open an account if the applicant's credit history is too thin to generate a credit score.

But, as you've seen, the requirement also can hamper the well-off who choose not to use credit regularly. Paying for everything with cash might be smart for them financially, but they may find themselves unable to get loans at decent rates when they need to borrow.

The fix for this problem is fairly simple: Your mom would just need to use her credit cards more regularly. She doesn't have to carry a balance; the FICO credit scoring formula doesn't distinguish between balances that are paid off and those that are carried month to month.

All she would have to do is make a few small charges each month and pay them off promptly. She should avoid "maxing out" her cards or even using more than 30 percent of her credit limit, and

she should pay the bill on time.

Q: I recently received compensation for serving as executor for a deceased neighbor's estate. The amount was just under \$10,000. I am 72, single, with few assets. What is the best way to invest this money so I don't wind up paying a chunk in taxes?

A: In the retirement community where I live, this is a common question, because many residents serve as executors for their neighbors, and all have very modest income.

A: The income you receive as an executor is taxable as income in the year you receive it, and there's not much you can do about that. What you're probably asking is how to minimize future taxes on any gains this money might generate.

One of the easiest choices, if you really don't want to pay any taxes, is to simply invest in a tax-free money market fund. These accounts typically invest in insured municipal bonds with little risk of loss, and your money is accessible whenever you need it.

What you probably don't want to do is invest in an annuity. These are often pushed on seniors who want tax deferral, but annuities usually come with relatively high expenses and surrender charges that could seriously eat into your stash if you needed to withdraw money.

Before you do anything, though, you might want to have a chat with a tax professional about the implications of your investment.

Liz Pulliam Weston is the author of "Your Credit Score: How to Fix, Improve and Protect the 3-Digit Number That Shapes Your Financial Future." Questions for Money Talk can be submitted to Liz at 280 N. LaSalle Ave., Suite 238, Studio City, CA 91604, or via her Web site, www.lizweston.com. She regrets that she cannot respond personally to queries.

Money Talk



Liz Pulliam Weston

Veterans: Job hunt comes easy for many injured

VETERANS, FROM PAGE 26

"Who runs the country now? It's the Vietnam era and they vowed never again, and so you got all the corporations, every nonprofit, all the associations and lobby arms doing everything they can," for this generation, Davis said.

Contractors like ManTech have another incentive to recruit veterans, regardless of disability: Many have security clearances that are in short supply in the work force, but necessary for an increasing number of government projects.

"And even if you're missing a limb, that doesn't mean you're incapable of supporting the military through a company," said Edward F. Lawton, head of the Washington area chapter of the American Military Retirees Association.

Brian Garvey, an Army Captain, met his future employer at the Walter Reed career fair.

The platoon leader and father of two young girls was deployed to Iraq last March and for months worked at the Baghdad airport, processing human resources files for troops stationed throughout that country.

On Sept. 18, Garvey's unit was assigned to show a contractor a damaged fence on a highway bridge between the airport and the heavily guarded Green Zone when a suicide bomber detonated an explosive — killing two of the crew and wounding 13.

Three days later Garvey was at Walter Reed, recovering from a series of surgeries to repair his hand and remove dozens of pieces of shrapnel from his skin.

"It would say a lot of the time was spent thinking 'What am I going to do? What is the best avenue for my family?'" Garvey recalled of his four-month stay at the hospital.

Garvey stopped by the career fair, hoping to pick up a few business cards and some ideas. Like most of the 150 servicemembers crammed into the hall, Garvey was without a résumé or firm career goals.

He grabbed brochures from such big contractors as Northrop Grumman Corp. and Raytheon Co., but spent the longest time talking to a representative from Alliant Technologies Inc., a Minnesota company that makes weapon systems and munitions. He filled out a card with his basic information and three days later got an e-mail from ATK, asking for a phone interview.

Soon he'll become a program manager at the best rate, a liaison between the company's engineers and its primary client — the U.S. military.

"Mentally it does me a lot of good, knowing that I'm not out there searching frantically for a job," said Garvey. "It gives me a sense of security. I know what my future has to offer."

THURSDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES									
52-week					Net	%	YTD	52-week	
High	Low	Open	Close		Chg	Chg	% Chg	Vol	High
10,559.13	9,748.48	Low Jones Industrial	10,559.13	+21.86	+1	+46	+23	1,124,312	11,928.00
3,823.96	2,743.46	Low Jones Transportation	3,823.96	+41.8	+22	+99	+35	1,124,312	4,180.00
1,530.90	1,124.74	Low Jones Utilities	1,530.90	+14.5	+41	+56	+27	1,124,312	1,600.00
7,365.14	6,211.33	Low Jones Chemicals	7,365.14	+13.98	+19	+148	+91	1,124,312	8,000.00
1,531.30	1,124.74	Low Jones Telecom	1,531.30	+4.03	+41	+54	+27	1,124,312	1,600.00
2,391.69	1,759.82	Low Jones Composite	2,391.69	-9.19	-44	-53	-16	1,124,312	2,600.00
1,217.50	1,060.72	Low Jones Energy	1,217.50	+4.37	+33	+12	+42	1,124,312	1,300.00
540.29	540.29	Low S&P 500	540.29	-0.19	-41	-18	+9	1,124,312	540.29
598.11	515.99	Low Dow Jones	598.11	+3.96	+15	-24	+6	1,124,312	600.00
12,254.90	10,764.52	Low Wilshire 5000	12,254.90	+6.02	+02	-13	+5	1,124,312	13,000.00
NYSE									
Most Active (\$1 or more)				Most Active (\$1 or more)				Most Active (\$1 or more)	
Apple (AAPL)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Microsoft (MSFT)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Amazon.com (AMZN)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Google (GOOG)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Facebook (FB)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Twitter (TWTR)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
LinkedIn (LNKD)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Slack (SLCK)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Dropbox (DBX)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Evernote (ENOV)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
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Evernote (ENOV)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
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Dropbox (DBX)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Evernote (ENOV)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Box.com (BOX)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Dropbox (DBX)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Evernote (ENOV)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Box.com (BOX)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Dropbox (DBX)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Evernote (ENOV)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Box.com (BOX)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
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Box.com (BOX)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Dropbox (DBX)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Evernote (ENOV)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Box.com (BOX)	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489	1,489
Dropbox (DBX)	1,489								

Sunday Horoscope

It's slow going most of the day, as the moon void of course urges us to relax and let down our emotional guard. The moon moves into Aquarius later in the day, and it feels right to lightly connect with friends — things hardly get deeper than "How's the weather?" but genuine warmth emanates from even the most surface-level conversations.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

MARCH 6. You explore the landscape of your own psyche this year and discover talents you don't even know you had. Invest in yourself, and don't be stingy. There are many spring romantic offers, but you're not sure when you trust. Keep things low key. Insist on getting paid better, and you'll find greater security in May. Love signs are Cancer and Scorpio.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You help yourself most when you help another. It's the perfect time to straighten out misunderstandings (probably over money) with a partner. The much-needed dose of reality you provide is appreciated.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20).

The more honest you are, the better life feels. Don't waste time trying to change what has already been decided — on to the next thing! All forward movement is good, though it won't seem that way at first.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). If you give yourself the same advice you dish out, you're extra lucky! Being graceful in the face of change is more important than perfection. Romantic conversations go well, especially if your love is a Scorpio or Pisces.

CANCER (June 22-July 22).

Do what's necessary to create more love in your life. This might include working less, playing more and making yourself available to interested people. A dream clues you to where the end of the rainbow lies.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).

Some of your friends want to make it OK for you to be less than all they could

be. It's time to add new names and numbers to your database. This takes moxie, but those with moxie usually get what they want.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

You want to draw the line, but ultimatums in love won't work. Keep the lines of communication open. It could be time to learn the fine art of allowing others to think that your plan was their idea.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).

Your efforts to be interesting pay off. Fun and unusual topics of conversation make you irresistible to the very people you consider so sophisticated and special. A health breakthrough is featured, too.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).

Exercise good judgment. Since your natural enthusiasm endears you to all you come in contact with, you're accepted into a variety of situations — a good thing if you should have nothing to do with.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).

Good news is speculative things could still go either way. This is where your faith will be tested. Keep up the positive intentions, and move forward, even when you're in convincingly skeptical company.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).

Profound happenings can take place. Separate yourself from your body, your actions and your beliefs. There's a soul inside you that can outshine all the limitations of this world, if you stop resisting.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).

You'll find it difficult to keep your commitments, especially those you make to yourself. The written word is the single most effective tool you can wield now. Write what you will do, and you're 50 percent more likely to do it.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

If you don't know where you're going, it's hard to know when you've arrived there. Use the tools to declare your destination or change it. A bold and public action will help you center yourself on a single goal.

Creators Syndicate

Glamorous hotels put on the ritz

Where did the word "ritzy" come from?

"Ritzy" comes from the Ritz hotels, named for their founder, César Ritz. Ritz opened the first Ritz hotels in London and Paris in 1905. He had built his reputation in the luxury hotel business with positions in fashionable London hotels and resorts where he cultivated connections with the old money of Europe and served as a guide and mentor to the nouveau riches of America. After managing the new Savoy Hotel in London, Ritz opened his own luxury hotels, and his son carried on the tradition by opening Ritz hotels around the world.

The fame of the hotels quickly

made the "Ritz" a well-known symbol of opulence. F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1922 titled one of his stories about the Jazz Age "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz." Even today, people will disparage their own humble residences with comparisons to the Ritz. "To put on the ritz" came to mean "to indulge in ostentatious display," the meaning that Irving Berlin celebrated in his 1929 musical tribute to glitz, "Puttin' on the Ritz."

The derivative adjective "ritzy" was first recorded in 1920.

This column was prepared by the editors of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition. Readers may send questions to Merriam-Webster's Wordwatch, P.O. Box 281, 47 Federal St., Springfield, Mass. 01102.

Put affair in past and do best work it out with husband

Dear Abby: I am a 36-year-old married woman. "We're not" I have been married for 10 years and are childless by choice.

We have had our share of problems, but for the most part, I've learned to put them in perspective.

Eight months ago, I started flirting with a guy at work.

"Jason" is married with two small children. He's a kind and heavy affair. The next thing I knew, we were having a fling.

I have never been so drawn to any man. I became convinced that this was the way to Jason meant I was no longer in love with Vern, so I left my husband.

Vern was devastated. I didn't tell him there was someone else. I said I was unhappy, which was the truth. I got my own place, and the affair continued until Jason's wife became suspicious. Then Jason started pulling back. He said he was worried about not being able to see his kids. Finally, Jason told me he thought it would be a good idea for me to go back to Vern. I begged him to change his mind and said I'd be his other woman for as long as it takes.

I was so in love. He made me

laugh, listened to me and made me feel special. He was everything my husband wasn't.

I am now back with Vern. I care for him, but the spark is long gone. He goes out of his way to make things right for me, but he no longer trusts me because he's heard rumors. I want our marriage to work, but all I do is think about Jason.

—Confused in Alaska

Dear Confused: While you're thinking about Jason, please remember that although he was amusing and a good listener, and the chemistry was strong, he was also a liar and a cheater. He may have made you feel special, but when the chips were down, his wife and children were more important to him than you.

Your husband wasn't born yesterday. He still loves you. Vern took you back in spite of the rumors. You now have a second chance — but only if you reorganize your priorities. If you want your marriage to work, you and Vern will have to admit that you had issues before you met each other, and seek professional counseling to work on them.

Dear Abby: I have known

Girl must let son of mother's boyfriend down extra gently

Dear Annie: I'm a 16-year-old girl who started at a new high school in September. I've made lots of friends and even met some boys I'm getting to know. My problem is what happened last summer.

My mother is seriously dating a man who has two children, ages 15 and 16. We've known him for six years. His 16-year-old daughter and I are so close, we think like sisters. The problem is his 15-year-old son, "Max." In June, Max wrote me a letter and told me that for the past two years, he has been in love with me. I felt the same way, and on several occasions, I took advantage of our feelings for each other.

However, this happened before I met some great guys at my new school.

I don't feel the same way about Max anymore, but he is still crazy about me. I know letting our relationship progress was wrong, and I'm going to have to live with what I did, but what should I do to help him get over me so we can all be friends? Avoiding him is not an option.

—Boston Student

Dear Boston: It might help to

explain to Max that he may one day be your stepbrother and you don't feel right about maintaining a romantic relationship. Tell him you think it's best if you care for each other only as brother and sister. He will be heartbroken and angry at first, but chances are, he will soon meet girls at school who interest him.

Stay friendly, but do not encourage his crush by flirting or allowing to last summer's activities. Treat him like a brother, and hopefully, he will accept it.

Dear Annie: "Richard" and I have dated for five years. He is kind, gentle, honest and makes me laugh. We became engaged on his birthday, and shortly after, Richard moved in with me. For the most part, things are great, but Richard is the biggest packrat and slob I have ever met.

I am a very neat person, but I am not obsessive about it. However, we are combining two households and need to downsize. Richard refuses to discard anything, including old magazines, books or outdated clothing, worn-out shoes and endless amounts of junk. He has boxes full of old pens, loose nails, you name it. On top of the hoarding,

"Jerry" for four years. We met through my ex-boyfriend, "Paul." We have been dating for about nine months.

Paul and I have a child together, our daughter, "Elise," just turned 5. My ex and I rarely speak to each other, and when we do, it's only about Elise. I love Jerry with all my heart and would never cheat on him. How can I convince him that I am no longer interested in Paul? Whenever we have an argument, he says, "Go back to Paul — maybe he can make you happy."

Would I be out of line if I told Jerry, "If you don't like the idea of me talking to my child's father, there's the door, and don't let it hit you on your way out?" We don't even live together, and he's trying to control me. How do you think it would be if we started living together — which we have decided not to do?

—Angry in Pennsylvania

Dear Angry: Jerry is insecure. Since you love him, do not give him an ultimatum. Because you share a child with Paul, there will always be contact of some sort. If Jerry is going to build a future with you, he will have to accept that fact. Do not live with him until he is mature enough to do so.

Letters for this column — with names and phone numbers — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.peweb.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

he leaves papers, food, cups and clothing all over.

I have begged Richard to clean up and de-clutter. I have silently cleaned up after him, hoping to be a role model. I have boxed things to give to charity, but he becomes angry. He has suggested a storage center. Nothing helps.

I love Richard and want to spend my life with him. But this relationship won't last if Richard does not figure out that he can't keep everything he has owned since childhood. This is driving me crazy. What can I do?

—L.A. Fiancee

Dear L.A.: Richard is obsessive-compulsive, and unless he is willing to admit he has a problem and seek help, nothing will change.

Urgo him to contact the Obsessive Compulsive Foundation (ocfoundation.org) at 676 State St., New Haven, CT 06511. If he refuses to do this for the sake of your relationship, you might want to reconsider living together — now, or in the future.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Mary Scully, syndicated editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to annie@mailbox.com, or write to Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate



Dear Abby



Annie's Mailbox

SPECIAL TO STARS AND STRIPES

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Q The engagement of Seal and Heidi Klum reminded me of another black singer and blonde beauty: Sammy Davis Jr. and Mai Britt, in the 1950s. What brought them together? — Annie Warren, Richmond, Va.

A The British pop star and the German supermodel are perfectly matched. Seal (born Sealheury Samuel), 42, has embraced Heidi's year-old daughter Leni as his own and even learned to sing her to sleep with German lullabies. And Heidi, 31, describes Seal's Dec. 23 proposal as "a unique experience." After a helicopter ride, he gave her a 10-carat yellow-diamond ring at 14,000 feet, atop a glacier in Whistler, British Columbia. Cool.

Q Why did George W. Bush dump Brent Scowcroft as chairman of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board? — Mark Clayborn, Nashville, Tenn.

A Because the retired General Scowcroft, 79 — who earlier served as the first President Bush's national security adviser — publicly criticized the second President Bush's decision to go to war in Iraq. For that, the White House has never forgiven him.



MovieWeb.com

AGING ACTRESSES: Barbara Streisand, above, came out of nowhere with her comedic turn last year in "Meet the Fockers"; Kirstie Alley, below, spares no humiliation in Showtime's "Fat Actress."



KRT

Q Robert De Niro and Cathy Moriarty were in New York for the 25th anniversary release of "Raging Bull" on Jan. 27, but not Joe Pesci. Why? — Doty-Ann S., Laredo, Texas

A Because Pesci prefers golf to publicity events. He was playing in the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic in California with his pal, golf pro John Daly. Perhaps he wasn't missed. We hear his prickly personality is one reason Pesci, 62, has had so many ups and downs in his career — and three ex-wives — and hasn't landed a good role since "Casino" in 1995.

Q Kirstie Alley has a new TV show called "Fat Actress." Why would she humiliate herself? — C.E., Milwaukee, Wis.

A "Fat Actress," premiering stateside tomorrow night, was Kirstie's idea of a way to get the last laugh at those who have ridiculed her ballooning weight. The improvisational Showtime series comes across like a reality show, but it's fiction. "Parts of it are an exaggerated version of me," Kirstie, 54, tells us. "It's about the way I think and react to things, not how things really are."

Q I heard that Amy Tan, the best-selling author of "The Joy Luck Club," was ill. How is she doing? — J.W., Chevy Chase, Md.

A Tan, 53, tells us she's "95 percent functional" but still recovering from Lyme disease, which went undiagnosed for years despite visits to 11 doctors and \$50,000 in medical bills. She had severe neurological problems, including hallucinations and blackouts. Tan published her first nonfiction work, "The Opposite of Fate: A Book of Musings," in 2003. She's now writing a novel.

Q Can you tell me about the song that begins and ends the film "Closer"? — Kelly Carter, Dallas, Texas

A To bookend his dark film, director Mike Nichols chose "The Blower's Daughter," by Irish singer-songwriter Damien Rice, 31. It's included on "O," his 2003 debut album.

Q How has the recent death of Doris Day's son, record producer Terry Melcher, affected her? — Diane D. (city not provided)

A Day, 80, is still recovering from the loss of her only child. She and Melcher — who died of skin cancer in November at the age of 62 — were very close and shared a commitment to her nonprofit Doris Day Animal Foundation. The actress tells us she plans to dedicate a special area of her dog-friendly Cypress Inn in Carmel, Calif., to her son's memory.

Q I loved Barbara Streisand in "Meet the Fockers." What are the chances we'll see her in another movie soon? — Roy Watson, Salem, Mass.

A Good. Streisand, 62, hadn't done a film in eight years ("The Mirror Has Two Faces") or a comedy in 25 years ("All Night Long"). She told pals that she really enjoyed acting again. And the critics and audiences loved Barbara as a comedienne — and she loved being loved. We predict she will find it hard to stay away from the screen for long.

Q I miss John M. Jackson as the admiral on "JAG." Why did he leave? — Germaine Pettit, Easton, Pa.

A After eight seasons, he'd done all he could with the role, says Jackson, 54. He decided to take time off to explore other acting mediums, including the New York stage. He has been replaced as the senior officer on "JAG" by David Andrews, 52, who plays Gen. Gordon Cresswell.



Seal, left, not only serenades fiancée Heidi Klum's daughter in German, he flew model Klum up a giant rock to give her a 10-carat rock of her own. It must be love.

FACES

Because of Dave Matthews

BY MIKE SZYMANSKI

Zap2it.com

The cast of "Because of Winn-Dixie" includes an 80-year-old Oscar winner (Eva Marie Saint for "On the Waterfront"), an Oscar nominee (Cicely Tyson for "Sounder"), a multiple Golden Globe nominee (Jeff Daniels) and an up-and-coming 11-year-old starlet who's going to be in "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" (AnnaSophia Robb).

As diverse as they all seem, the actors all wanted to be in the movie, in part, because of Dave Matthews.

Although it's directed by well-respected Wayne Wang, and although the book it's based on won the Newberry Honor and is on the New York Times bestseller list, it's the chance to co-star in the first major movie with the frontman of the Dave Matthews Band that really got them all together.

"Wasn't he extraordinary?" says

Tyson, who plays a wild-haired hermit in the film. "I didn't know it was his first time acting in a big role like this. He's so talented."

Dressed in a blue shirt and dark suit, and sporting a trimmed goatee and looking a lot less scruffy than he does in the film, Matthews tells Zap2it.com he has held out for years before committing to a major movie. He did a small part in "Where the Red Fern Grows" and wrote songs for "21 Grams," "Mr. Deeds" and "Matrix Reloaded," but never played as large a role as this ex-con pet shop owner who befriends a girl and her dog.

"I've been reading scripts for years and years, and this felt right," says Matthews.

While filming, Matthews was working on music for a new band album, which he's now completing.

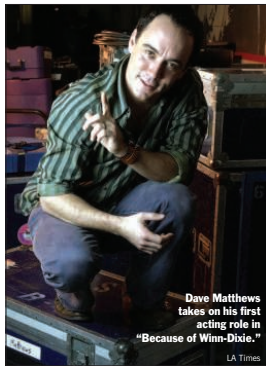
One of the songs he was kicking around is the "Butterfly" song, which he plays for AnnaSophia. He didn't want

any of his public style to come through, so he ad-libbed this new ditty.

"It would just make the whole movie go, (makes plopp noise), and come to a grinding halt right there," Matthews says, if any of his popular songs or style were easily recognized. "So I tried really hard to make it seem like it was inspired by insecurity, or nervousness, that he started singing this song that he obviously had written for this little girl."

Matthews laughs, and adds that being a dad of 2-year-old twins also helped inspire the tender song. He says he particularly enjoyed working with father-of-three Jeff Daniels, who plays a preacher and AnnaSophia's father in the film.

Matthews gets one of the biggest laughs of the film, with a simple line about bringing pickles to a party. He explains that he was waiting, while swatting mosquitoes, for a long time to swing his line and so when it was his turn, he exploded. "He says, 'It was just sort of all I had in me. I brought pickles!'"



Dave Matthews takes on his first acting role in "Because of Winn-Dixie."

LA Times

Lohan takes on her dad

Lindsay Lohan says her father has no right to claim a share of her earnings.

"He didn't do anything for my career except go out and not come home at night," the 18-year-old actress/singer tells W magazine in its April issue. "So I don't think he deserves anything. He doesn't even deserve my respect."

Michael Lohan's estranged wife, Dina, filed divorce papers in January. Michael Lohan responded by saying he wants half of the 15 percent his daughter allegedly gives her mother — a figure that could be \$7 million a year, his lawyer has said.

Nelly not welcome

Ministers from 20 churches have banded together to protest Nelly's upcoming performance at Arkansas State University.

"When we started seeing some of the vile and filthy lyrics ... we thought we should get involved," said the Rev. Adrian Rodgers of the Fullness of Joy Church. "Jonesboro is a wonderful city because of what does not come here."

Rodgers said he was concerned about lyrics that include references to drugs, sex and violence and songs that Rodgers says are demeaning to women.

From wire services

March-Mania!



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\$1,500 Discount on FatBoys!

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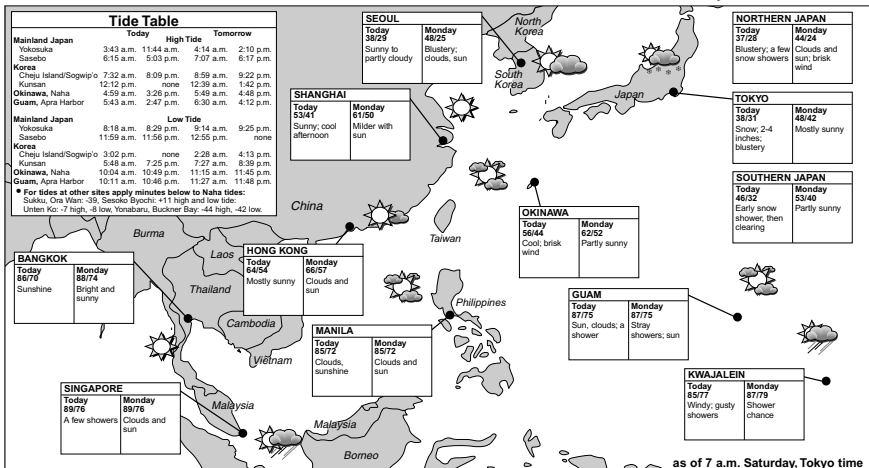
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The Pacific Forecast

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Extended Forecasts

TOKYO

Tuesday: Partly sunny, high 53, low 41.
Wednesday: Partly sunny, high 53, low 44.

KADENA

Tuesday: Partly sunny,
high 65, low 56.
Wednesday: Periods of clouds
and sunshine,
high 69, low 64.

SEOUL

Tuesday: Sunny,
high 47, low 33.
Wednesday: Periods of clouds
and sunshine,
high 52, low 29.

MANILA

Tuesday: Showers, high 85, low 72.
Wednesday: Partly sunny, high 88, low 74.

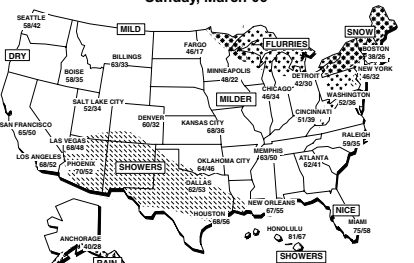
HAGATNA

Tuesday: Showers,
high 87, low 75.
Wednesday: Showers,
high 85, low 73.

Friday's USA Temperatures

CITY	HIGHLOW	CITY	HIGHLOW
Albuquerque	59/37	Los Angeles	66/52
Amarillo	64/38	Little Rock	68/55
Anchorage	56/32	Louisville	70/55
Asheville	56/35	Miami	73/45
Baltimore	60/28	Milwaukee	61/24
Birmingham	45/26	Nashville	64/36
Buffalo	48/25	New York	39/22
Boise	54/33	Omaha	67/43
Boston	54/24	Orlando	69/38
Brownsville	66/32	Philadelphia	38/22
Burlington	28/15	Phoenix	34/26
Burlington	80/51	Pittsburgh	39/24
Charlotte	62/40	Portland, Ore.	58/43
Charleston, S.C.	60/24	Portland, Me.	54/34
Cleveland	38/21	Salt Lake City	54/34
Columbus, Ohio	38/27	St. Louis	64/36
Duluth	37/22	San Antonio	67/39
Durham	58/35	San Diego	66/38
Hartford	34/17	San Juan	87/77
Helena	52/26	San Francisco	81/74
Indianapolis	49/32	Tulsa	72/42
Jacksonville	66/36	Washington, D.C.	64/44
Kansas City	69/33	Wichita	72/42

Sunday, March 06



Shown is noon position of precipitation. Forecats highs/lows are for selected cities

U.S. Extended Forecast

An upper-level storm system meandering to the south of Arizona will trigger rain and mountain snow showers across the Desert Southwest on Sunday. In addition, thunderstorms will rumble in spots. A steadier rain and thunderstorms will also impact western Texas, while a bit of rain will extend into the eastern parts of the state. A large area of high pressure will provide another dry day for the rest of the Rockies and West Coast. At the same time, plenty of sun will shine across the Plains and into the Southeast under the dominance of another high pressure. Farther north, a low pressure center will spread some snow from the Great Lakes into western portions of the Northeast.

Sunday's Pacific Temperatures

CITY	HIGHLOW	CITY	HIGHLOW	CITY
Bangkok	86/70	Iwakuni	41/33	Sasebo NB
Beijing	57/36	Kadena AB	56/44	Sapporo
Camp Casey	39/29	Kunsan AB	38/34	Seoul
Christchurch	74/50	Kwajalein	85/77	Shanghai
Diego Garcia	88/79	Manila	85/72	Singapore
Hagatna	87/75	Misawa AB	35/22	Sydney
Hanoi	63/54	Osan	38/30	Taegu
Hong Kong	64/54	Perth	84/66	Taipei
Honolulu	81/67	Pusan	42/34	Tokyo

Sunday's World Temperatures

HIGHLOW	CITY	HIGHLOW	CITY	HIGHLOW	CITY	HIGHLOW	CITY	HIGHLOW
41/35	Acapulco	88/72	Budapest	34/25	Kabul	50/30	Nairobi	88/56
37/28	Athens	81/54	Buenos Aires	89/68	Kiev	37/29	New Delhi	81/57
36/22	Auckland	73/61	Cairo	90/63	Kuwait	41/17	Oslo	88/29
35/24	Bombay	75/54	Geneva	82/60	Lima	49/22	Paris	88/56
35/20	Barbados	90/71	Cape Town	75/52	Madrid	45/21	Rio de Janeiro	77/67
70/65	Barcelona	55/33	Gaza	30/22	Mexico City	75/48	Rome	48/33
42/35	Berlin	26/18	Istanbul	56/39	Montreal	24/12	St. Petersburg	21/20
38/28	Buenos Aires	62/48	Jerusalem	80/53	Mogadishu	92/38	Tokyo	29/26
38/31	Burkina Faso	33/24	Johannesburg	50/59	San Francisco	25/15	Warsaw	88/56



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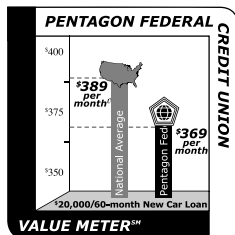
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SCOREBOARD

AFN TV & Radio

Sunday

AFN-Sports, 1 a.m.-College basketball: ESPN college gamday.

AFN-Sports, 2 a.m.-College basketball: Louisville at DePaul.

AFN-Sports, 3 a.m.-College basketball: Ball State at Cleveland State.

AFN-Sports, 4 a.m.-College basketball: Syracuse at Connecticut.

AFN-Sports, 5 a.m.-College basketball: Cincinnati at Miami.

AFN-Sports, 6 a.m.-College basketball: Oklahoma at Texas Tech.

AFN-Sports, 7 a.m.-College basketball: ESPN college gamday/sportsday.

AFN-Sports, 8 a.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Phoenix.

AFN-Sports, 9 a.m.-College basketball: Texas at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 10 a.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 11 a.m.-College basketball: Texas at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 12 p.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 1 p.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 2 p.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 3 p.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 4 p.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 5 p.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 6 p.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 7 p.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

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AFN-Sports, 6 a.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 7 a.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

AFN-Sports, 8 a.m.-College basketball: Arizona at Oklahoma State.

Boston College vs. Boston (ss) at Fort Myers, Fla.

College basketball

AP Men's Top 25

Thursday

1. Illinois (29-0) beat No. 84-50, Next at Ohio State, Sunday.

2. Stanford (22-1) beat No. 23-Florida State 91-76, Next vs. No. 6-Duke, Sunday.

3. Kansas (22-1) beat No. 10-Florida, Sunday.

4. Duke (21-2) beat No. 11-Georgia Tech 78-67, Next at North Carolina, Sunday.

5. North Carolina (21-2) did not play, Next at Rutgers, Saturday.

6. Miami (22-1) beat No. 13-Miami 83-59, Next at No. 7-North Carolina, Sunday.

7. Arizona (24-3) did not play, Next at Missouri, Sunday.

8. Texas (21-2) did not play, Next at Texas, Saturday.

9. Louisville (24-1) beat No. 18-California 94-87, Next at DePaul, Saturday.

10. Washington (24-1) beat No. 16-California 88-73, Next at Stanford, Saturday.

11. Arizona (24-3) did not play, Next at Arizona State, Saturday.

12. Syracuse (23-2) did not play, Next at New Mexico, Saturday.

13. Connecticut (21-3) did not play, Next at Wisconsin, Saturday.

14. Michigan State (21-3) did not play, Next vs. Penn State, Saturday.

15. Connecticut (21-3) did not play, Next vs. Penn State, Saturday.

16. Utah (24-2) did not play, Next vs. San Francisco, Saturday.

17. Pacific (24-2) beat Cal State Fullerton 84-66, Next at Oregon, Saturday.

18. California (21-5) lost to No. 5-Louisville 94-87, Next at Oregon, Saturday.

19. Villanova (20-4) did not play, Next at Indiana, Saturday.

20. Oklahoma (22-3) did not play, Next at Texas Tech, Saturday.

21. Oklahoma (22-3) did not play, Next at Texas Tech, Saturday.

22. Cincinnati (23-3) did not play, Next at Wisconsin, Saturday.

23. Wisconsin (19-4) did not play, Next vs. Penn State, Saturday.

24. Pittsburgh (19-5) did not play, Next vs. Nevada, Saturday.

25. Nevada (23-2) beat Hawaii 55-47, Next at State State, Saturday.

Thursday's men's scores

SOUTH

Alabama 58, Jackson St. 54

Cumland 49, 65, Cumberland 74

Cambridge 71, Freed-Hardman 79

CS, Memphis 59

Fayetteville 51, Bowie 59

Georgia 65, Georgia College 65

Grambling 51, Alabama A&M 69

Howard 59, Howard 59

North Carolina 91, State 76

MIDWEST

Emporia 51, 100, Missouri State 75

Indiana 64, Purdue 50

Kentucky 52, Indianapolis 51

Indiana 59, Missouri 59

St. Edwards 62, Wis.-Parkside 45

Indiana 51, Quincy 2

AP Women's Top 25

Thursday

1. LSU (27-1) did not play, Next vs. Alabama, Saturday.

2. Stanford (20-2) did not play, Next vs. Kansas or Washington, Saturday.

3. Kansas (22-1) did not play, Next vs. Wisconsin, Saturday.

4. Wisconsin (22-1) did not play, Next vs. Georgia Tech or Miami, Saturday.

5. Auburn (22-1) did not play, Next vs. Auburn, Saturday.

6. Virginia (22-1) did not play, Next vs. Virginia, Saturday.

7. Baylor (24-1) beat No. 13-Texas Tech 94-68, Next at Missouri, Saturday.

8. Michigan State (22-1) did not play, Next vs. Illinois, Saturday.

9. St. John's or Seton Hall, Big East tournament, Saturday.

10. Notre Dame (25-4) did not play, Next vs. West Virginia or Pittsburgh, Saturday.

11. Texas (21-2) did not play, Next vs. Oklahoma or Texas A&M, Saturday.

12. DePaul (24-2) did not play, Next vs. Minnesota, Saturday.

13. Texas Tech (21-3) lost to No. 7-Baylor 79-67, Next at Marquette or Colorado, Saturday.

14. Connecticut (20-7) did not play, Next vs. Georgetown or Syracuse, Saturday.

15. Tennessee (22-2) did not play, Next vs. Purdue, Saturday.

16. Memphis (24-3) did not play, Next at La Salle or St. Joseph's, Saturday.

17. Kansas State (21-6) did not play, Next vs. Nebraska or Oklahoma State, Saturday.

18. Vanderbilt (21-3) did not play, Next vs. Arkansas or Tennessee, Saturday.

19. North Carolina (21-6) did not play, Next vs. Arizona or Connecticut, Saturday.

20. Texas (21-2) did not play, Next vs. Colorado, Saturday.

21. Georgia (24-1) did not play, Next vs. Mississippi, Saturday.

22. Georgia (24-1) did not play, Next vs. Mississippi, Saturday.

23. Penn State (18-9) did not play, Next vs. Michigan or Portland, Saturday.

24. Next vs. Pepperdine, Saturday.

25. Maryland (19-8) did not play, Next vs. Clemson, Saturday.

Thursday's women's scores

EAST

New Hampshire 56, IMB 51

Georgia 59, Georgia Tech 59

Towson 67, William & Mary 52

AFN-Sports, 1 a.m.

Alabama A&M 69, Grambling 51

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AFN-Sports, 4 a.m.

Alabama A&M 69, Grambling 51

Alabama A&M 69, Grambling 51

Suns snap Pistons' 8-game streak

The Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Detroit Pistons' romp through the West came to an end in Arizona. The Phoenix Suns, showing a rugged side they rarely display, rallied from 10 points down behind the clutch play of Steve Nash and Amaré Stoudemire to snap the Pistons' eight-game winning streak 100-97 on Thursday night.

"We won because we finally got tough," Nash said. "We gave up so many offensive rebounds, lost so many loose balls. Mentally, I don't think we were tough enough. But now we saw a little opportunity and hope, we got tough. It's too bad it took that long to start the switch, but it was good enough for a win."

Nash, still not fully recovered from the hamstring injury that caused him to miss the previous three games, returned to get 16 points and 14 rebounds. His three-pointer with 1:06 to play put the Suns ahead 98-94, then his two free throws made it 100-94 with 37.4 seconds to play.

"He's everything for them," Chauncey Billups said. "When they win, he's got to make every play, and when they lose, it's because he didn't make the play. That's a lot of pressure on one man, but he's taking it and running with it."

Stoudemire battled the Pistons' bruising front line for 26 points and 10 rebounds. Quentin Richardson scored 20, including 5-for-8 on three-pointers.

Rasheed Wallace, who had 22 points and 13 rebounds for the Pistons, sank a three-pointer to cut it to 100-97 30.5 seconds from the finish and Detroit had one last chance to tie it. But Billups' 25-footer was short and Detroit lost for just the second time in 15 games.

"The Suns compiled the league's second-best record (44-14) with a pedal-to-the-metal style, but this was a different kind of game, played for the most part at the tempo the defending NBA champion Pistons prefer."

Suns coach Mike D'Antoni said, "I think we can run better than that against these guys,

but they are the ultimate test, them and San Antonio."

Down 76-66 and with Nash resting on the bench, the Suns scored the first eight points of the fourth quarter, four by Stoudemire, to cut it to 76-74 on Joe Johnson's 18-footer with 9:20 left.

"I think it was huge that we could rest Steve and gain ground," D'Antoni said, "and have a fresh, 35-year-old Nash for the final five minutes."

Phoenix took the lead 85-84 when Nash sank two free throws 5:33 from the finish. "It's not a statement, it's just saying that we're a high-caliber team that is capable of taking the fourth quarter," Stoudemire said. "We've got guys that are capable of doing it, and tonight me and Steve did."

Nash said the hamstring bothered him some.

"It's not 100 percent, but right now the plan is to only play if it's not getting worse and see if we can get it back to 100 percent on the fly," he said. "Tomorrow, we'll have to re-evaluate and see if it's OK."

Detroit coach Larry Brown made a timely veiled reference at the officiating.

"We never got into the bonus the last three quarters," he said. "You consider we have 21 offensive rebounds and don't get to the bonus, it's tough."

But the Pistons also credited Phoenix's fourth-quarter play. "We had them right where we wanted," Billups said. "We had our chance, and they hit the big shots down the stretch. We didn't."

Heat 106, Nets 90: At East Rutherford, N.J., Shaquille O'Neal had 20 points and 13 rebounds in his return from a three-game absence, and Dwyane Wade had 27 points, eight assists and six rebounds to help Miami end New Jersey's winning streak at four games.

Alonzo Mourning made his first appearance in his second stint with the team during the game, playing the final 2:19 and grabbing two rebounds. Mourning, playing with a transplanted kidney, re-signed with the Heat this week after being traded from New Jersey to Toronto and then being waived by the Raptors.

Vince Carter had 27 points for the Nets.



Detroit's Rasheed Wallace, front, works his way past the Phoenix Suns' Shawn Howard during Thursday night's game in Phoenix.

Nuggets 96, Pacers 87: At Denver, Marcus Camby had 17 points, 22 rebounds, seven assists and seven blocks, and Carmelo Anthony scored 28 in Denver's fifth straight victory.

The Nuggets improved to 12-4 since coach George Karl took over Jan. 27, and moved into the Western Conference for the final playoff spot.

Stephen Jackson led the Pacers with 16 points.

Indiana's Jermaine O'Neal sprained his right shoulder on a drive to the basket in the second quarter. X-rays were negative, but the All-Star forward was still in pain at halftime and said the trainer had to pop his shoulder back in place.

NBA scoreboard				
Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	27	30	.474	7 1/2
Philadelphia	27	30	.474	7 1/2
New York	24	33	.421	9 1/2
Toronto	24	33	.421	9 1/2
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	29	29	.500	0
Washington	32	24	.571	3 1/2
Orlando	28	28	.500	5 1/2
Charlotte	12	47	.203	20 1/2
Atlanta	12	47	.203	20 1/2
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	30	26	.538	0
Cleveland	31	25	.554	1/2
Chicago	28	28	.500	3 1/2
Indiana	28	29	.491	4 1/2
Pittsburgh	12	47	.203	20 1/2
Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	44	13	.771	0
Dallas	33	25	.569	1 1/2
Houston	33	25	.569	1 1/2
Memphis	17	41	.291	12 1/2
New Orleans	17	41	.291	12 1/2
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	40	16	.714	0
Denver	39	17	.693	1/2
Minnesota	38	18	.682	1
Portland	33	23	.591	5 1/2
Utah	33	23	.591	5 1/2
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	44	13	.771	0
Sacramento	36	23	.609	1 1/2
L.A. Lakers	28	30	.483	5 1/2
L.A. Clippers	28	30	.483	5 1/2
Golden State	10	47	.208	20 1/2
Thursday's games				
Miami 106, New Jersey 90				
Denver 96, Indiana 87				
Phoenix 100, Detroit 97				
Friday's games				
New York at Orlando				
Golden State at Washington				
Charlotte at Boston				
Portland at New Jersey				
Utah at New Orleans				
Chicago at San Antonio				
Milwaukee at Minnesota				
Atlanta at Indiana				
Dallas at L.A. Lakers				
Saturday's games				
Denver at L.A. Clippers				
San Antonio at Phoenix				
Washington at Charlotte				
Portland at New Jersey				
Chicago at Milwaukee				
Atlanta at Indiana				
Dallas at San Antonio				
Sunday's games				
Detroit at Sacramento				
Memphis at Minnesota				
Toronto at New Orleans				
Portland at Seattle				
Golden State at New York				
Phoenix at Charlotte				
Indiana at L.A. Lakers				

Pacers' Jermaine O'Neal on injured list

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Jermaine O'Neal was placed on the injured list Friday by the Indiana Pacers, one day after he sprained his shoulder in a game against Detroit.

The Pacers also waived forward Michael Curry and signed veteran free agent forward Dale Davis. Davis was waived by New Orleans earlier this week after being acquired in the deal that sent Baron Davis to Golden State.

O'Neal, acquired by Indiana in a trade for Dale Davis in August 2000, sprained his right shoulder on a drive to the basket in the second quarter against the Nuggets. He will miss a minimum of five games.

Grizzlies' Wells on IL

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The Memphis Grizzlies put Bonzi Wells on the injured list Friday with a slightly herniated disc, and he is expected to be sidelined 2-3 weeks.

Over 51 games, Wells is averaging 10.4 points, 3.4 rebounds, 1.0 steal and 1.3 three-pointers per game Tuesday's game against the Warriors in the second quarter with back spasms.



Roundup

Payton rejoins Celtics

BOSTON — Gary Payton returned to the Celtics on Friday, one week after Boston sent him to Atlanta in a trade for Antoine Walker.

Payton re-signed with Boston after the Hawks waived him and was on the court at the Celtics' practice facility in Waltham on Friday morning, team spokesman Jeff Triss said.

Payton was traded to Atlanta with Tom Gugliotta, Michael Stewart and a first-round pick at the NBA trading deadline.

Nuggets sign guard Person

DENVER — The Denver Nuggets may have finally found the outside shooting threat they've been missing all season, signing Wesley Person on Thursday to replace injured shooter Keith Van Horn and Lenard for the playoff run.

Denver had been in need of an outside shooter after Lenard went down with a torn Achilles' tendon

in the season opener. The Nuggets had been searching since Lenard's injury, but couldn't find the right fit until Person was released by Miami on Tuesday.

"It's obvious we need more spacing," Nuggets coach George Karl said. "We've got some guys who's post-ups and penetrations will be better because of the spacing. Sometimes you can trick teams, you have one shooter and they think you have three or four."

Expected to fill in as a spot-up shooter for the Heat, Person instead spent most of the season watching from the bench. He averaged 3.9 points in just 16 games and had played just four games since Dec. 4 because he refused to go on the injured list.

Mourning upset with Nets

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Miami's Alonzo Mourning brought some bitterness back to New Jersey with him Thursday prior to his first game in nearly three months.

He said Nets President Rod Thorn gave an unfair portrayal of him after trading him to Toronto. Mourning took issue with Thorn's statements in mid-December that the Nets believed he would never play another game for them.

Mourning, playing with a transplanted kidney, went on the injured list Dec. 10 with knee tendinitis.

"I was hurt. I had some ailments that I was dealing with. It's not like I was holding out," Mourning said. "For God to paint a picture like that is kind of unfair to me. If I really, really opened the truth, you guys would be amazed at some of the things that were said. But I don't think it's right to go there and do that."

Raptors' Williams put on IL

TORONTO — The Toronto Raptors placed forward Eric Williams on the injured list with a sprained right calf on Friday and activated forward Page Sow.

Williams, who asked for a trade last month, hasn't played in Toronto's last three games, and has averaged just 18.5 minutes a game since being acquired from New Jersey on Dec. 17 in the trade that sent Vince Carter to the Nets.

Gasol cleared for workouts

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Paul Gasol, the Memphis Grizzlies' leading scorer, was cleared to begin individual workouts after doctors examined his injured left foot, the team said Friday.

Nuggets 96, Pacers 87

INDIANA — Jermaine O'Neal was placed on the injured list Friday by the Indiana Pacers, one day after he sprained his shoulder in a game against Detroit. The Pacers also waived forward Michael Curry and signed veteran free agent forward Dale Davis. Davis was waived by New Orleans earlier this week after being acquired in the deal that sent Baron Davis to Golden State.

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Suns 100, Pistons 97

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Baseball begins testing new drug abuse policy

The Associated Press

Josh Beckett was one of the Florida Marlins summoned on the first day of baseball's new era of drug testing, and he welcomed the chance to help improve the sports' image.

"It's something we've got to do to clear our name," Beckett said Thursday in Jupiter, Fla.

All of baseball seemingly has to prove its innocence, which is why

Spring training roundup

players agreed to a new deal calling for more testing, additional banned performance-enhancing substances and a 10-day suspension for a first offense.

Not all players agree with the new policy, though.

Los Angeles second baseman Jeff Kent told the San Francisco Chronicle that testing should be supervised by an independent body, that amphetamines also should be banned and that penalties should be more along the lines of the Olympic movement, under which first offenses generally merit a two-year ban.

In Washington, a congressional

committee scheduled a hearing for March 17 on the new drug-testing agreement, which hasn't even been finalized. Among those invited to testify were Jose Canseco, Jason Giambi, Mark McGwire, Curt Schilling, Sammy Sosa, Rafael Palmeiro, Frank Thomas, commissioner Bud Selig and players' association head Donald Fehr.

Giambi, one player looking to restore his image — on and off the field — began his comeback from a season wrecked by injury and an off-season married by the steroid controversy.

Giambi walked twice and grounded out as the New York Yankees opened their exhibition season with a 2-2 tie against the Pittsburgh Pirates.

"I'm excited to get out there, getting a chance to play and have positive at-bits," Giambi said. "That's the biggest thing, tracking the ball well. And when you start doing that, you can start getting pitches to hit and hitting them hard and go from there."

In December, the San Francisco Chronicle reported he told a federal grand jury in 2003 that he had used steroids.

In other games:

Red Sox 4, Twins 3: At Fort Myers, Fla., Matt Clement allowed one run in two innings and Shawn Wooten homered in a win for Boston, which was playing its first game since winning its first World Series title in 86 years last October.

Giants 9, Angels 8: At Tempe, Ariz., Pedro Feliz — playing for Barry Bonds, who is rehabbing his knee — Moises Alou and Edgardo Alfonzo each had run-scoring singles for San Francisco. AL MVP Vladimir Guerrero hit a two-run double off Armando Benitez for the Angels, playing their first game as the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim.

Devil Rays 7, Reds 3: At St. Petersburg, Fla., Tampa Bay's Alex Gonzalez had three hits, three RBIs and made a spectacular diving grab in his first game at third.

Orioles 8, Marlins 4: At Jupiter, Brian Roberts went 2-for-3, scored twice and drove in a run for Baltimore. Sammy Sosa has a groin strain and did not make the trip.

Al Leiter, an offseason acqui-



New York Yankees first baseman Jason Giambi grounds out in the third inning against the Pittsburgh Pirates on Thursday in Tampa, Fla.

tion by Florida, allowed three hits, walked two and hit a batter in two innings. He was charged with three runs, one earned.

Indians 7, Astros 3: At Winter Haven, Fla., Travis Hafner hit a two-run homer and Jake Westbrook struck out two in two innings to lead Cleveland.

Nationals 9, Bethune-Cookman 6: At Viera, Fla., Washington free-agent signee Esteban Loaiza allowed two hits and three runs — one earned — over 2 1/3 innings.

Cubs 2, Athletics 1: At Phoenix, Ariz., Ramirez hit a two-run homer off Joe Blanton, and Carlos Zambrano pitched two shutout innings for the Cubs. Dan Haren pitched two scoreless innings in his A's debut.

Braves 9, Dodgers 8, 8 innings, rain: At Vero Beach, Fla., Andruw Jones and Brian Jordan homered off Jeff Weaver, who allowed six runs and seven hits in 2 1/3 innings for Los Angeles.

Tigers 9, Phillies 1: At Clearwater, Fla., Rondell White had three hits, and Deweyne Wise homered as Detroit spoiled Charlie Manuel's debut as Philadelphia's manager.

Mariners 5, Padres 4: At Peoria, Ariz., Ryan Franklin pitched two scoreless innings and Raul Ibanez contributed an RBI single for Seattle.

Royals 6, Rangers 4: At Surprise, Ariz., Mike Sweeney showed no effects of the back problems that caused him to miss 110 games the past two seasons by going 3-for-3 for Kansas City.

Kenny Rogers gave up a run on two hits in one inning for Texas.

Diamondbacks 4, White Sox 3: At Tucson, Ariz., Russ Ortiz allowed two hits in his first two innings for Arizona, and Mark Buehrle gave up two unearned runs and five hits over three innings in his first action of the spring for Chicago.

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Ponson's case postponed

The Associated Press

ORANJESTAD, Aruba — The assault case against Baltimore Orioles pitcher Sidney Ponson was postponed Thursday, and a judge gave both sides until May 10 to reach an out-of-court agreement.

The 28-year-old Ponson is accused of committing violence

alone or in the company of others in public, kicking a person in the head and battering a person by hitting him in the face with his fist.

If convicted, Ponson faces a minimum sentence of four years in jail, a fine and community service.

Judge Bob Wit, flown in from the nearby Dutch Caribbean island of Curacao to give the case a sense of impartiality, said he took the pitcher's career into consideration in postponing the case.

Wit said that Ponson's livelihood could be jeopardized if he has a criminal record because his U.S. work visa could be taken away.

Ponson allegedly punched a local judge several people on a beach in the west-coast town of Boca Catalina told Ponson that he was harassing people with his

personal watercraft and operating it recklessly.

Drese, Rangers finalize deal

SURPRISE, Ariz. — Ryan Drese doesn't have to worry about being the last player cut by the Texas Rangers this spring. Now he just has to keep performing.

The Rangers finalized a new \$6 million, two-year contract Thursday with Drese, who evolved into a surprise No. 2 starter and a 14-game winner last season. He was the first Ranger recalled after being the last cut in camp.

Drese made \$370,000 last season, and the Rangers were prepared to renew the right-hander's contract at that figure without a multiyear deal. The Rangers also have a \$3 million option for 2007.

Last year was a breakout season for Drese, who went 14-10 with a 4.20 ERA in 33 starts and 207 1/3 innings.

Mets' Heredia to undergo tests

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. — Mets reliever Felix Heredia was sent back to New York on Thursday after experiencing numbness in his pitching hand.

Heredia allowed one run in a shaky inning Wednesday and took the loss in the team's spring training opener against the Washington Nationals. The left-hander was scheduled for tests Friday.

Few intriguing mar victories to Gonzaga

BY NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
The Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Gonzaga coach Mark Few isn't considered in the same league as Duke's Mike Krzyzewski.

But he's doing quite well in his first head-coaching gig.

In his sixth season at Gonzaga, Few's winning percentage of 81 ranks among the elite coaches in Division I history with at least five years on the job.

"They continue to impress and amaze all of us," said Brad Holand, coach of San Diego, the only West Coast Conference team to interrupt Gonzaga's string of five league tournament titles in the six seasons. "They keep coming up with great talent and great teams."

In what was supposed to be a rebuilding year in a much-tougher WCC, No. 12 Gonzaga (23-4, 12-2) once again won the regular-season title and a bye into the semifinals of this weekend's league tournament. The Zags are shooin' for a seventh consecutive trip to the NCAA tournament.

Gonzaga plays in a low-profile league which doesn't provide the steady diet of top opponents that face teams in the power confer-

ences. Few has not won a national title or led a team beyond the round of 16 in the NCAA tournament.

Still, the Bulldogs have become fixtures in Top 25.

Living in Spokane, a quiet city of 200,000 in eastern Washington, Few, 42, and his staff have combed the world for players who allow the Zags to reload each season. This team features players from Martinique, Brazil, Canada and New Zealand.

Few's Gonzaga teams are 156-36 since he took over at the beginning of the 1999-2000 season. Only Everett Case at North Carolina State (161) and Roy Williams at Kansas (159) have won more game after their first six seasons.

Gonzaga and Duke are the only Division I teams to have lost fewer than 10 games in each of the past six seasons. Under Few, the Zags have records of 26-9, 26-7, 29-4, 24-9 and 28-3. They were 28-7 under Dan Monson in 1998.

Few spent 10 years as an assistant before succeeding Monson, who moved to Minnesota. Gonzaga has made seven NCAA appearances and three in the NIT since Few arrived on campus.



Coach Mark Few continues to build Gonzaga into an elite program in his sixth season.

Through all his success, Few, the son of an Oregon minister, has remained a quiet, low-profile family man, displaying little interest in moving to a bigger program. He just built a big new house and indulges a passion for fly fishing and building a national hoops power.

He said this has been a special season.

"This league championship means as much to us as anything," Few said. "The league is the best it's been in the 16 years I've been up here."

This season's team had only one senior starter but has numerous freshman and sophomores in key roles. Yet the Zags, playing a tougher non-conference schedule, beat such luminaries as Oklahoma State, Washington and Georgia Tech. On of their losses was to top-ranked and undefeated Illinois.

Deacon: Teams try to turn Paul's drive against him

DEACON, FROM BACK PAGE

His you-won't-beat-me attitude might be his best asset, but it's exactly what opponents are counting on in trying to throw him off his game. While he's polite and relaxes by listening to gospel music off the court, he's downright fiery on it.

"At times I think people mistake my competitive nature for arrogance or as a dirty player," Paul said. "I don't care who's in front of me. Whatever I've got to do to win, that's what I'm going to do."

Paul has a drive that few can match. In a much-publicized feat as a high school senior, he scored 61 points in a game to honor his grandfather, who had been beaten to death days earlier at age 61.

In that game, he scored the final points when he made a basket and was fouled, but he intentionally missed the free throw to stay at 61 — seven points shy of breaking a 52-year-old North Carolina scoring record.

His competitiveness showed from an early age — he once hit a playmate, the son of former NBA player and coach Sidney Lowe, in daycare for taking his snack — and has never wavered.

His father, Charles, remembered a young Paul getting angry during basketball games against his older brother, C.J., now a senior guard at Division II Saint Joseph's University, because he was too short to win.

Two years later, Chris irked some parents during flag football games because his aggressive blocks knocked opponents to the ground.

"Whatever sport he played," his father says, "he wanted to be the best."

That urge still seems insatiable. Paul and Gray challenge each other everything from who can make the most baskets on a goal in their dorm room to bowling, which Paul takes seriously enough to own his own ball — which looks like an ABA basketball.

Even his 10-year-old cousin doesn't get a pass.

"If I play 1-on-1, I'll let him get a couple of points," Paul said, "but in the end, I'm going to win. I hate for another person to be able to get what they best at."

Paul says he thinks of nothing other than going to the Final Four. His determination is clear, but it's also a convenient way to avoid the question that Demon Deacons fans desperately want answered.

For now, Paul says he's not thinking about leaving for the NBA after the season.

"After the season, I'll probably think about it a lot," he said. "But right now, there ain't nothing like playing college basketball ... the environment, being able to go to class the day after you beat Carolina and Duke. There's nothing like that."

Conference tournament scoreboard

America East Conference

At Binghamton University Events Center
Vestal, N.Y.
First Round
Friday, March 4

New Hampshire vs. Maryland-Baltimore County
Stony Brook vs. Hartford

Seminials
Saturday, March 5

Albany, N.Y. vs. Binghamton
Vermont vs. New Hampshire-Maryland-Baltimore County winner

Northeastern vs. Stony Brook-Hartford winner
Boston University vs. Maine

Seminials
Sunday, March 6

Albany-Binghamton winner vs. Vermont-New Hampshire-Maryland-Baltimore County winner

Championship
At Higher-Seeded Team
Saturday, March 12

Seminifinal winners

Atlantic Sun Conference

At The Club Event Center
Nashville, Tenn.
First Round
Thursday, March 3

Gardner-Webb 64, Troy 59
Central Florida 81, Mercer 68

Belmont 67, Georgia State 61
Appalachian 66, Lipscomb 60

Seminials
Friday, March 4

Gardner-Webb vs. Jacksonville
Central Florida vs. Belmont

Championship
Saturday, March 5

Seminifinal winners

Big Sky Conference

First Round
Saturday, March 5

Eastern Washington at Montana
Weber State at Sacramento State

At Memorial Coliseum
Portland, Ore.
Seminials
Tuesday, March 8

Montana State vs. higher-seeded first-round winner
Portland State vs. lower-seeded first-round winner

Big South Conference

First Round
Tuesday, March 4

Charleston Southern 69, Berry 60
High Point 98, North Carolina-Asheville 93, 0

Winthrop 74, Coastal Carolina 62
Birmingham-Southern 69, Radford 40

Seminials
Thursday, March 3

Charleston Southern 85, High Point 55
Winthrop 76, Birmingham-Southern 64

Championship
Saturday, March 5

Charleston Southern at Winthrop

Colonial Athletic Association

At Richmond College
Richmond, Va.
First Round
Friday, March 4

James Madison vs. William & Mary
Delaware vs. Virginia

Quaterfinals
Saturday, March 5

Old Dominion vs. James Madison-William & Mary winner
Drexel vs. Hofstra

Virginia Commonwealth vs. Delaware-Towson winner
North Carolina-Wilmington vs. George Mason

Seminials
Sunday, March 6

Old Dominion-James Madison-William & Mary winner vs. Drexel-Hofstra winner
VCU-Delaware-Towson winner vs. North Carolina-Wilmington-George Mason winner

Championship
Monday, March 7

Seminifinal winners

Horizon League

First Round
Tuesday, March 4

Wright State 61, Butler 57
Ipswich of Chicago 76, Youngstown State 75

At U.S. Cellular Arena
Cleveland 84, Cleveland State 75

Second Round
Friday, March 4

Detroit vs. Wright State
Loyola of Chicago vs. Illinois-Chicago

Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference

At HBCU Arena
Buffalo, N.Y.
First Round
Friday, March 4

Iona vs. Siena
Canisius-Marist vs. Manhattan

Seminials
Saturday, March 5

St. Peter's vs. Iona-Siena winner
Rider vs. Canisius-Marist winner

Championship
Sunday, March 6

Niagara vs. St. Peter's-Manhattan winner
Rider-Canisius-Marist winner vs. Fairfield-Manhattan winner

Mid-Conference Championship
At John O. Hammond Arena
Nashville, Tenn.
First Round
Friday, March 4

Oral Roberts vs. Southern Illinois State
Missouri-Kansas City vs. Oakland, Mich.

Championship
Sunday, March 6

Indiana-Purdue-Indianapolis vs. Western Illinois
Valparaiso vs. Chicago State

Seminials
Monday, March 7

Oral Roberts-Southern Illinois winner vs. IU-Indianapolis-Western Illinois winner
JMU-Oakland winner vs. Valparaiso-Chicago State winner

Championship
Tuesday, March 8

Seminifinal winners

Missouri Valley Conference

At Savvis Center
St. Louis
First Round
Thursday, March 4

Bradley vs. Indiana State
Drake vs. Evansville

Seminials
Saturday, March 5

Southern Illinois vs. Bradley-Indiana State winner
Louisiana-Mechanicville vs. Southwest Missouri State

Championship
Sunday, March 6

Wichita State vs. Drake-Evansville winner
Crown Point vs. Illinois State

Seminifinal winners
Southern Illinois vs. Bradley-Indiana State winner vs. North Iowa-SW Missouri State winner
Wichita State-Drake-Evansville winner vs. Crown Point-Illinois State winner

Northeast Conference

First Round
Thursday, March 3

Morrmouth, N.J. 54, Connecticut State 49
Fairleigh Dickinson 78, St. Francis, N.J. 60

Wagner 69, Robert Morris 60
Long Island University 51, St. Francis, Pa. 67

Seminials
Friday, March 4

Wagner at Morrmouth, N.J.
Long Island University at Fairleigh Dickinson

Championship
Wednesday, March 9

Seminifinal winners

Ohio Valley Conference

First Round
Friday, March 4

Tennessee Tech 72, Eastern Illinois 68
Tennessee Tech 71, Sanford 60

Eastern Kentucky 74, Tennessee State 68
Missouri State 65, Murray State 60

Championship
Saturday, March 5

Seminifinal winners

Patriot League

First Round
Friday, March 4

Lehigh vs. Colgate
Cortland vs. Middlebury

Championship
Saturday, March 5

Seminifinal winners

Southern Conference

At McKendree Arena
Chattanooga, Tenn.
First Round
Wednesday, March 2

Elon 64, Western Carolina 57
Georgia Southern 68, Western Carolina 57

Sun Belt Conference

At Denton, Texas
First Round
Friday, March 4

Alabama State 70, South Alabama 57
Arkansas State 66, North Alabama 57

Arkansas State vs. North Texas
Middle Tennessee vs. New Mexico State

Championship
Saturday, March 5

Seminifinal winners

At The Super High

Denton, Texas
First Round
Friday, March 4

Arkansas State vs. North Texas
Middle Tennessee vs. New Mexico State

Championship
Saturday, March 5

Seminifinal winners

West Coast Conference

At The Leavitt Center
Santa Clara, Calif.
First Round
Friday, March 4

Pepperdine vs. Loyola Marymount
San Francisco vs. Santa Clara

Championship
Saturday, March 5

Seminifinal winners

At The Leavitt Center

Santa Clara, Calif.
First Round
Friday, March 4

Pepperdine vs. Loyola Marymount
San Francisco vs. Santa Clara

Championship
Saturday, March 5

Seminifinal winners

Gonzaga vs. San Diego-Pepperdine-Loyola Marymount winner
Saint Mary's, Calif. vs. Santa Clara-San Francisco winner

Championship
Monday, March 7

Seminifinal winners

Louisville's O'Bannon leaves 'em cheering

The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Larry O'Bannon saved his best for last at Freedom Hall.

The Louisville native scored a career-high 33 points in his final home game to help No. 9 Louisville clinch a share of the Conference USA regular-season title with a 94-82 victory over No. 18 Charlotte on Thursday night.

"Larry O'Bannon had a very, very special night," Louisville coach Rick Pitino said. "It was a Holly-

wood ending for a nice young man."

The 6-foot-4 O'Bannon hit his first five three-point attempts and tied a school record with 26 points in the first half.

"Your hometown fans are going to remember you in your last game," O'Bannon said. "I didn't know it was going to be like that."

Taquan Dean, diagnosed with mononucleosis last month, made six three-pointers and finished with 27 points for Louisville (25-4, 13-2), playing its final season in Conference USA before moving to the Big East.

"I wasn't feeling it, I was exhausted," Dean said. "Once I hit a couple of shots, then things started to go."

The Cardinals received the top seed in the conference tournament next week in Memphis, and can wrap up their first outright regular-season Conference USA title Saturday at DePaul.

O'Bannon was 9-for-10 from the field in the first half.

"I just hit my first couple of threes and my teammates started looking for me,"

"Your hometown fans are going to remember you in your last game. I didn't know it was going to be like that."

O'Bannon said. "I do it every day in practice. I guess it just carried over."

He left the floor with 1:01 to go, waving to the fans and embracing teammates as the crowd chanted "Lar-reel! Lar-reel!"

"You couldn't ask for anything better," O'Bannon said. "I never thought of a night like this. You don't dream it up."

Brendan Plavich hit seven three-pointers and scored 28 points for the 49ers (21-5, 12-3).

No. 1 Illinois 84, Purdue 50: At Champaign, Ill., Dee Brown scored 24 of his 27 points in the first half and Derron Williams added 21 for Illinois (29-0, 15-0 Big Ten).

Brown was 8-for-10 from three-point range and 9-for-12 from the field overall, setting career highs for baskets and attempts from long range and an Assembly Hall record for three-pointers. The Illini have won 21 straight home games.

Gary Ware scored 12 points for Purdue (7-19, 3-12).

No. 2 North Carolina 91, Florida State 76: At Chapel Hill, N.C., Sean May scored 32 points to help North Carolina secure at least a share of the Atlantic Coast Conference regular-season title.

May also had 12 rebounds and freshman Marvin Williams added 17 points for the Tar Heels (25-3, 13-2 ACC). North Caroli-

na, with scoring leader Rashad McCants out for the third straight game because of an intestinal disorder, can clinch the top seed in the ACC tournament with a home victory against Duke on Sunday.

Al Thornton scored 19 points for the Seminoles (11-18, 3-12).

No. 6 Duke 83, Miami 59: At Durham, N.C., J.J. Redick led Duke with 29 points and senior Daniel Ewing had 14 points and 10 assists in his final game at Cameron Indoor Stadium.

Shelden Williams added 14 points and 12 rebounds for the Blue Devils (22-4, 11-4 ACC). Guillermo Diaz had 17 points for Miami (16-11, 7-9).

No. 10 Washington 106, California 73: At Berkeley, Calif., Bobby Jones scored 22 points, and Washington (24-4, 14-3 Pac-10) made a school-record 16 three-pointers and moved within one victory of at least a share of its first Pac-10 title in 20 years.

No. 17 Pacific 92, Cal St.-Fullerton 88: At Fullerton, Calif., Guillaume Yango scored 23 of his 27 points in the second half to lead Pacific (24-2, 17-0 Big West) to its 20th straight victory.

No. 25 Nevada 55, Hawaii 47: At Honolulu, Nick Fazekas had 20 points and 12 rebounds to help Nevada (23-5, 15-2) wrapped up the Western Athletic Conference regular-season title.

Larry O'Bannon
Louisville guard



Duke's J.J. Redick (4) passes over Miami's Anthony Harris during the second half of Thursday night's game in Durham, N.C. Duke won 83-59 as Redick had 29 points.

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Mickelson mails Morale

Leads by two after near-record 36-hole score

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Phil Mickelson was atop the leader board for the ninth consecutive round in stroke play, and no one was terribly surprised to see him as the closest pursuer Friday in the Ford Championship at Doral.

Mickelson showed up at Doral nearly five hours before his tee time to fine-tune a game that appears to need no work, then played the Blue Monster without a bogey for a 6-under 66 that gave him a two-shot lead over Billy Andrade.

"I don't know what the big hoopla about him is," Andrade said after a 66. "He's one of the best players in the world. He has been one of the best players in the world since he was 12. When you get guys that are that talented and you get on rolls, they're obviously tough to beat."

Mickelson is clearly on a roll in second rounds; his average score is 64.8 in five tournaments. That includes a 60 in Phoenix, which gave him a share of the lead. He's been there ever since, including a wire-to-wire victory last month at Pebble Beach.

"The only thing that matters is leading on Sunday," said Mickelson, whose 14-under 130 total was one short of the 36-hole record at Doral. "That's kind of the goal now."

Mickelson was the first to concede that this tournament is far from over. There are a bevy of

Golf roundup

world-class players on the Blue Monster, and several of them remain in range.

Two-time Masters champion Jose Maria Olazabal had a 69 and was at 11-under 133, and Billy Mayfair birdied three of the last four holes for a 67 and was another shot back.

Tiger Woods went eight consecutive holes without a par — that included three straight bogeys for the second time this year — for a 2-under 70 that put him in a pack of players at 9-under 135 that included No. 1 Vijay Singh, David Toms and defending champion Craig Parry.

There were so many players jockeying for position that when Sergio Garcia missed a par putt on the 18th hole, he dropped 10 spots on the leader board, down to 8-under 136 with Retief Goosen and Jim Furyk.

"There's so many good players right there," Mickelson said. "I just feel like I've got to go out and keep pushing to make birdies if I want to stay there."

When Andrade chipped in from 50 feet for birdie on the ninth hole, that broke a 10-way tie for the lead. Before long, it became a race between him and Mickelson to see who wound up on top going into the weekend. They ended on different sides of the course, and the final hole was decisive.

Andrade finished on the 18th hole, and he pulled his tee shot into the water. After taking a drop and hitting into shaggy grass atop a bunker, he had to make a slick 20-footer to salvage bogey.

Mickelson looked like he might be in trouble when he fanned his tee shot on the par-5 eighth, headed behind some palm trees at best or into the water at worst. Instead, it smacked a fan in the right shoulder and bounced back into the short grass.

"Just another fairway hit," Mickelson said with a sneaky grin.

He finished on the par-3 ninth with a 7-iron into 8 feet for his 16th birdie of the tournament.

The Blue Monster, already susceptible without strong wind, was softer because of overnight rain and it continued to drizzle on Friday morning.

The best anyone did among the early starters was finish at 9-under, although Woods was kicking himself.

He holed a 25-foot downhill birdie putt on the 18th, and made his fourth straight birdie with a beautiful bunker shot from an awkward lie on the par-5 first. That put him 11-under, two shots clear of the early starters.

And then it fell apart.

He three-putted from the fringe on No. 2, running his first putt about 10 feet past. Then he was fooled by the wind, hitting a 7-iron too flush and it went too long, and his chip raced 12 feet past the cup. He made his third



Phil Mickelson, who has led nine straight rounds in stroke-play events, has played 36 holes at Doral in 14-under, one off the tourney record.

straight bogey by coming up short and right on the par-3 fourth and taking two shots to get to the green.

Jimenez leads by two in Dubai

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Miguel Angel Jimenez of Spain shot 7-under 65 Friday to take a two-stroke lead over Ernie Els after the second round of the Dubai Desert Classic.

Els shot 68 for a two-day total of 10-under 134. Welsh golfer Stephen Dodd was three strokes off the lead after a 65 on the Majlis course at the Emirates Golf Club.

Three other players, including former tournament winners Thomas Bjorn and Colin Montgomerie, were five strokes behind. Bjorn carded a 68 and Montgomerie shot 67.

Ever-growing sports landscape needs a trim

Tiger Woods' suggestion that a shorter PGA Tour season would make for a better one is too good to ignore.

Golf's major dome looked at the field the day before the Ford Championship at Doral began and counted 11 of the world's top dozen players entered. Last year, the season stretched 44 weeks and the top four — Vijay Singh, Woods, Ernie Els and Phil Mickelson — played together about eight times, and half of those were majors.

That got Woods thinking.

"It would be more exciting for the fans, and I'm sure the sponsors and TV and everybody if we did play more often together," he said. "The only way you could do that is if we shortened the season."

So here's a better suggestion: Since fewer games would ensure for a better product in every sport, why stop at golf?

It's hardly the only sport that's been thinking about reaching its bell curve to where supply meets demand. If not for their sake, then for ours. With few exceptions, every sport puts out way too much junk for consumption just because they can. It's the beauty of being a cartel.

If all those leagues, conferences and sanctioning bodies had to

operate in a real competitive marketplace the way, say, McDonald's does, they'd have to shutter some franchises and pull a few items off the menu every now and then.

Think you couldn't live with less sports? Well, the NHL is in hibernation and nobody's noticed. Turn on the TV most nights and the long-standing knock about the NBA regular season being too long — "82 games to eliminate Cleveland from the playoffs" — still rings true if you substitute "Atlanta" or "New Orleans" for "Cleveland."

Cut those two off at 50 games and playoffs — remember when they were called "winter sports" — and you'd be better off by half.

Baseball can start by trimming back to 154 regular-season games, less to bring its records back in line than to ease the transition to, let's say, 100 games and playoffs. If you don't think commissioner Bud Selig was serious when he uttered the C-word (contraction) a few years back, then you should

Jim Litke



know what he knows: The only people possibly excited about a Kansas City-Tampa Bay tilt in late September are the stadium vendors and the players' parents.

But here's another thing Selig and his pals in the sports' ownership club know: despite putting dozens of junkers like that every season, the money keeps rolling in.

Much more of it rolls into the Yankees' coffers than say, the Royals or the Rays, the two teams whose pastries would be even more profitable — not to mention watchable and honorable — if they beat up fewer patisserie-faced Red Sox, Twins and Angels more.

There will always be underdogs, so there will always be upsets, but they will mean more precisely because there will be less.

Don't think so? Television ratings have been slipping over the past decade or so for just about every sport except for NASCAR, which is the least, and the NFL, which is holding firm. Part of it is because of the splintering audience, but part of it has to do with their approaches.

NASCAR had a hard time getting on the tube until 2001, it's catching up to demand. Pro football, on the other hand, limits its supply to each team playing once

a week. Two-thirds of the time a game is televised in a local market, it outdraws every other show on TV that week, including prime-time blockbusters like "CSI," "Survivor" and "Everybody Loves Raymond."

And there would be more love for baseball and basketball, hockey, golf, tennis, college football and basketball, etc., if there was a little less of each. But we'll grant you this much: The argument against cutbacks almost anywhere is seamless.

Players, owners, league executives, conferences, sanctioning bodies, TV networks and even sportswriters might blush sometimes repeating it, but they'll point out that as long as somebody is paying for the shock as well as the premium stuff, might as well put it on the tube and in arenas, too.

Maybe. Right now, attendance is still strong in most sports and sponsorship dollars are up, up, up across the board. Even hockey, which was flailing long before it was canceled the season, climbed from \$210 million to \$230 million the year before. Last year, companies in North America plunked down \$11.1 billion, and the IEG Sponsorship Report, which tracks industry trends, predicts spending will climb by 8.8 percent.

Meanwhile, network TV executives have been promising for 20 years to stop the spiraling rights fees they shell out for sporting events — only to get amnesia on the very day they sit down across a bargaining table to negotiate. And their rationale is that like everything else on TV, the games that aren't pulling their own financial weight disappear soon enough (remember the XFL?).

They're right, of course. Despite predictions to the contrary, the pie of sports has continued expanding and since every big-time sport enjoys a monopoly, it's possible they could go on growing forever. The problem with building an empire in the entertainment business, like any other business, is that sooner or later you run into somebody else's empire. That's where the real competition begins.

Remember that line from Bruce Springsteen, "There was 57 channels and nothin' on"? Today, the average household gets 100 — and if we're talking about sports events, really worth watching, by and large, there's still precious little on.

It's high time to start cutting. Be like Tiger Woods. Send along your suggestions.

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at: jlitke@ap.org

Linemen living large

Foursome who do the grunt work strikes it rich; Packers lose two from O-line; Dallas signs trio

The Associated Press

Sometimes offensive linemen find big money and the spotlight.

It happened Thursday in NFL free agency, with Jonas Jennings, Mike Wahle, Marcus Stroud and Ben Hamilton getting rich.

NFL roundup
There were some more glamorous positions filled, with running back LaMont Jordan landing in Oakland and sacks specialist Reggie Hayward signing with Jacksonville. But this was a day for the blockers.

San Francisco signed Buffalo tackle Jennings, one of the better offensive linemen available, to a seven-year, \$36 million deal. The Niners allowed 52 sacks last season during their 2-14 campaign.

San Francisco's need of a change of playing for a team like the 49ers that has the history and some of the great players and all of the Super Bowls they have done in the past," Jennings said. "Growing up (in Atlanta), ironically, they were my favorite team."

They became his favorite again by offering so much money.

"Jonas will help us rebuild an offensive line that certainly needs rebuilding," 49ers coach Mike Nolan said. "I've always believed that the offensive line is the foundation to any great offense. ... If you see you have an opportunity to get a good player, certainly a player like Jonas, then that is what you do."

Carolina, which struggled with its line last year, filled a hole with Wahle, who spent seven seasons at guard and tackle protecting Brett Favre in Green Bay. Wahle signed a five-year deal worth about \$25 million.

"I knew I wanted to come here. I think this team is going to be good for a number of years," he said.

Rivers also is leaving the Packers. The guard signed a \$20 million, five-year, with a \$9 million signing bonus, to join the Cowboys.

Dallas also signed defensive tackle Jason Ferguson from the Jets. The Cowboys spent \$28 million in signing bonuses on cornerback Anthony Henry, who signed Wednesday, Riv-

era and Ferguson.
"They're expensive, but the value is there," owner Jerry Jones said after giving Ferguson \$21.5 million for five years and Henry \$25 million for the same span.

Of the prosperous linemen, only Hamilton stayed put. He re-signed with the Denver Broncos for five years and could move from guard to center, where Tom Nalen has been a fixture. Hamilton reportedly got \$16 million.

Jordan's move to Oakland cost the Raiders a five-year, \$27.5 million contract with an \$11 million signing bonus.

"I know people are going to say 'He's never carried the load' and there are going to be a lot of questions. I accept the challenge because I know I'm going to succeed," said Jordan, a backup to Curtis Martin with the Jets for four years.

The Jets didn't need long to replace Jordan, agreeing to a five-year contract with Derrick Baylock. Baylock leaves Kansas City for an \$11 million contract. The Jets also signed defensive lineman Lance Leary, a backup for the New York Giants the past four seasons.

Along with Wahle, Carolina signed cornerback Ken Lucas, a three-year starter for Seattle.

"I knew before I even got off the plane that I wanted to sign with Carolina," Lucas said. "Anybody in the NFL knows that the Carolina Panthers have the most talented D-line in the NFL. If I had to choose between Seattle and Carolina, I would have easily chose Carolina."

Hayward, who had 19 sacks the past two seasons, got a five-year contract worth \$25 million from Jacksonville and will team up front with the Bowl tackles Marcus Stroud and John Henderson.

Jacksonville also agreed to terms with free agent defensive tackle Martin Chase and veteran quarterback Nate Hybl.

The Rams also signed linebacker Antonio Pierce, a top defender for Washington last season in his first year as a starter. On Friday, the Giants signed offensive tackle Kareem McKenzie, a starter the past three seasons for the Jets.

McKenzie, considered one of the top two of-



Former Buffalo Bills offensive tackle Jonas Jennings signed a seven-year, \$36 million contract with San Francisco on Thursday.

fensive tackles on the market, got \$37.75 million over seven years with a \$12.5 million signing bonus, according to ESPN.com.

While adding Pierce and McKenzie, the Giants cut eight-year veteran receiver Ike Hilliard.

Pierce's departure to a division opponent hurt the Redskins. Washington did not add a player, agreeing to terms with free agent receiver David Patten, who caught 44 passes for 800 yards and seven touchdowns last season for the Super Bowl champion Patriots.

The Patriots got some help at cornerback, acquiring Duane Starks in a trade with Arizona for a third-round pick in April's draft.

Safety Bhaoh Jai, late of Green Bay, signed a three-year contract with San Diego. Jeremiah Trotter agreed Friday to a five-year contract with the Philadelphia Eagles, who also reached terms on a one-year deal with defensive end Hugh Douglas.

The Rams added their second linebacker in two days, signing Chris Claiborne for three years and \$10.5 million to go along with former Cowboy Dexter Coakley, who signed a five-year, \$14.5 million deal.

Buffalo signed free agent Mike Gandy on Friday to offset the departure of Jennings.

Houston signed linebacker More Greenwood, who started for Miami, to a five year, \$22.5 million deal, and re-signed defensive tackle Seth Payne.

Denver brought back linebacker Ian Gold, who played one season with Tampa Bay.

QB Brees signs deal to stay in San Diego

By BERNIE WILSON

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Drew Brees was in an \$8 million mood on Friday.

The quarterback signed a one-year contract that more than quadruples his pay from last year, when he came off the scrap heap to lead the San Diego Chargers back to the playoffs for the first time in nine seasons.

The Chargers put the "franchise" tag on Brees on Feb. 17, meaning he'll get \$8,078,000 next year, or an average of the NFL's five highest-paid quarterbacks in 2004.

Brees returned from a vacation in Australia late Thursday night and signed the deal as soon as he could on Friday.

"I was ready and eager to get the thing official," said Brees, who made \$1.56 million in base pay last year.

It wasn't the long-term deal he wants, but it was the next best thing.

"I'm very happy," Brees said. "I'm ecstatic, the fact I get to be here for another year is the foundation that we've already kind of set for ourselves. We're only going to get better."

Brees doesn't seem offended the Chargers aren't interested in giving him a long-term deal — for now, anyway — or that coach Marty Schottenheimer has had to ordain him as the starter for next year, meaning he'll have to compete with Philip Rivers in training camp.

"Of course I want to be here, and of course I want a long-term deal, but the main thing is, I wanted to be here. I wanted to be a part of this," he said. "I just think we can do something special."

Brees was all but cast aside last offseason after the Chargers finished an NFL-worst 4-12. Brees was an easy scapegoat after throwing 15 interceptions and just 11 touchdown passes, getting benched for five straight games and being yanked from two others.

General manager A.J. Smith declared that the Chargers needed to "upgrade" at quarterback, then swung a draft-day deal that brought the 25-year-old Rivers to the team.

But Rivers held out for half of training camp and Brees kept his job. He threw 27 touchdowns and kept Brees and Rivers. Those two alone will count for nearly \$11 million under the cap next season.

"I don't want to take every snap next year," Brees said.

McCombs mulled firing Tice to prod Moss

By DON SEEHOLZER

St. Paul Pioneer Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — After weeks of denials and eight days of silence, Minnesota Vikings officials finally had their say Thursday on the Randy Moss trade. And still they were upstaged by owner Red McCombs.

During a conference call set up to discuss the Moss trade, McCombs said he was so disappointed in the "protection" last season that he thought about firing the man who was supposed to motivate Moss — coach Mike Tice.

"I seriously considered making that change to have that effect about the time that Randy was coming off his injury," McCombs said.

Moss returned to the lineup on Nov. 28 against Jacksonville after missing three games because of a hamstring injury.

McCombs said he thought a coaching change might give Moss "a spark," and that he had a replacement in mind.

McCombs said the would-be re-

placement never knew he was close to a job offer.

"He doesn't know it, he never will know it because he has no reason to think I'm coaching," said "But I had the coach in mind."

Before Wednesday, McCombs had never mentioned the possible coaching change to anyone, he said, not even to Tice. Tice first learned about it from McCombs about an hour before the conference call and tried to laugh it off.

"I gave serious thought to quitting, too," Tice said. "Sometimes I say I don't need this [stuff], so I guess we're even."

Why, after so many months, did McCombs choose Wednesday to go public with the story?

"I wanted you to know how strongly I felt in trying to find a way in my mind that it would make sense to keep Randy," he said. "That was the extent [to which] I was prepared to go."

McCombs said he thought something had to change if Moss and the Vikings were to realize their potential.

"The bottom line is we had Randy seven years and we didn't do it," McCombs said. "Randy is the kind of guy who I think is a five-downfield player in every game."

Tice took issue with the idea that the Vikings weren't getting the most of Moss.
"I won't agree with that comment," he said. "I think we utilized Randy as best as we saw fit. We built our offense around him. We don't know how else we could have got more out of him."

Moss caught 574 passes for 90 touchdowns during his time with the Vikings, and his 9,142 receiving yards are the most of any receiver through his first seven NFL seasons. The trade to Oakland became official on Wednesday, the Vikings receiving line-backer Napoleon Harris, the No. 7 overall pick in the upcoming draft and a seventh-round pick.

Moss was involved in more than his share of controversies, though, including two high-profile incidents near the end of last season.

McCombs, Tice and vice presi-

dent of football operations Rob Brzezinski all said no specific instance led to the trade, and each wished Moss well in Oakland.

Moss left the field at Washington with two seconds remaining in the team's last regular-season game, angering quarterback Daunte Culpepper and other teammates. A week later, he pretended to pull down his pants after catching a touchdown pass.

Moss wasn't traded because those incidents, McCombs said, or because he had become a problem in the locker room.

"Randy's a good guy," McCombs said. "He's not a jerk. I like Randy a lot."

The Vikings have been criticized for not getting enough for Moss.

"As far as getting equal value for Randy, I knew we couldn't get value for Randy," he said, "not even" if they'd have to pay twice what we got, because you can't measure the ability and potential that is in that player."

SPORTS



Big blockers make the biggest deals
on second day of signings, Page 47

Determined Deacon

Wake Forest guard Paul at ease in the spotlight

BY AARON BEARD
The Associated Press

Chris Paul hadn't taken a shot this season when he was anointed a candidate for national player of the year. But things changed after just a few games.

Following a freshman season in which Wake Forest's star point guard could do no wrong, his every move suddenly was being examined and his failures magnified as he led a team facing the highest expectations in program history. Now he's a constant target for opponents seeking to frustrate the fourth-ranked Demon Deacons.

Yet Paul responds to it all with a shrug. Handling the pressure, he says, is his job.

"Everyone is gunning for me," he said. "You're the captain when the ship's sailing, and you're the captain when it sinks. That's just one of the things you have to deal with."

The sophomore, the leading vote-getter on The Associated Press preseason All-America team, is averaging 15 points, seven assists and three steals per game. The numbers are similar to those of his Atlantic Coast Conference rookie of the year season, but Paul says he judges his play by one thing: wins.

By that measure, Paul has improved substantially. Wake Forest,

which hopes to reach its second Final Four, earned its first No. 1 ranking in November and has been among the nation's elite all season.

It's no wonder that Paul, who grew up in near-by Lewisville, is so popular here. Yet the 19-year-old nicknamed "The Mayor" has had to fight for everything this season.

After appearing on the cover of countless preseason publications, Paul heard criticism after a slow start. In an early four-game stretch, he failed to score in double figures three times, and his 10-point effort in the fourth hardly mattered in a lopsided loss at Illinois.

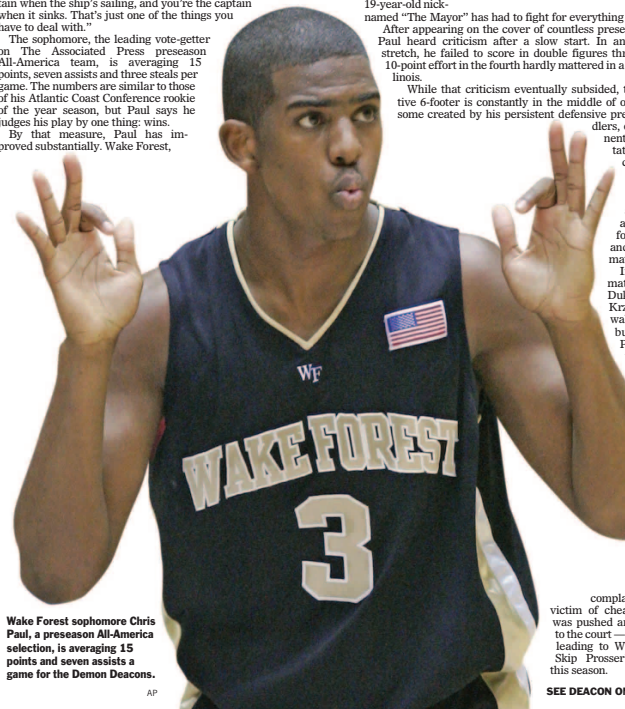
While that criticism eventually subsided, the ultra-competitive 6-footer is constantly in the middle of on-court tussles — some created by his persistent defensive pressure on ballhandlers, others from opponents' efforts to irritate him with physical play.

"He's not going to back down from anybody," said Justin Gray, an all-ACC performer last year and Paul's roommate.

In the second matchup against Duke, coach Mike Krzyzewski started a walk-on who bumped and hacked Paul early to turn up the intensity in a top-10 matchup. Paul later picked up his second technical foul in as many games against the Blue Devils this season. In last week-end's game against Virginia, Paul

complained he was the victim of cheap shots after he was pushed around and shoved to the court — the latter incident leading to Wake Forest coach Skip Prosser's first technical this season.

SEE DEACON ON PAGE 44



Wake Forest sophomore Chris Paul, a preseason All-America selection, is averaging 15 points and seven assists a game for the Demon Deacons.

AP



Mickelson leads the assault on par at meek Doral

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O'Bannon helps Louisville lock up share of C-USA title

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Suns rally, put end to Pistons' wild ride through West

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Baseball's new drug testing policy goes into effect

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